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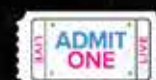
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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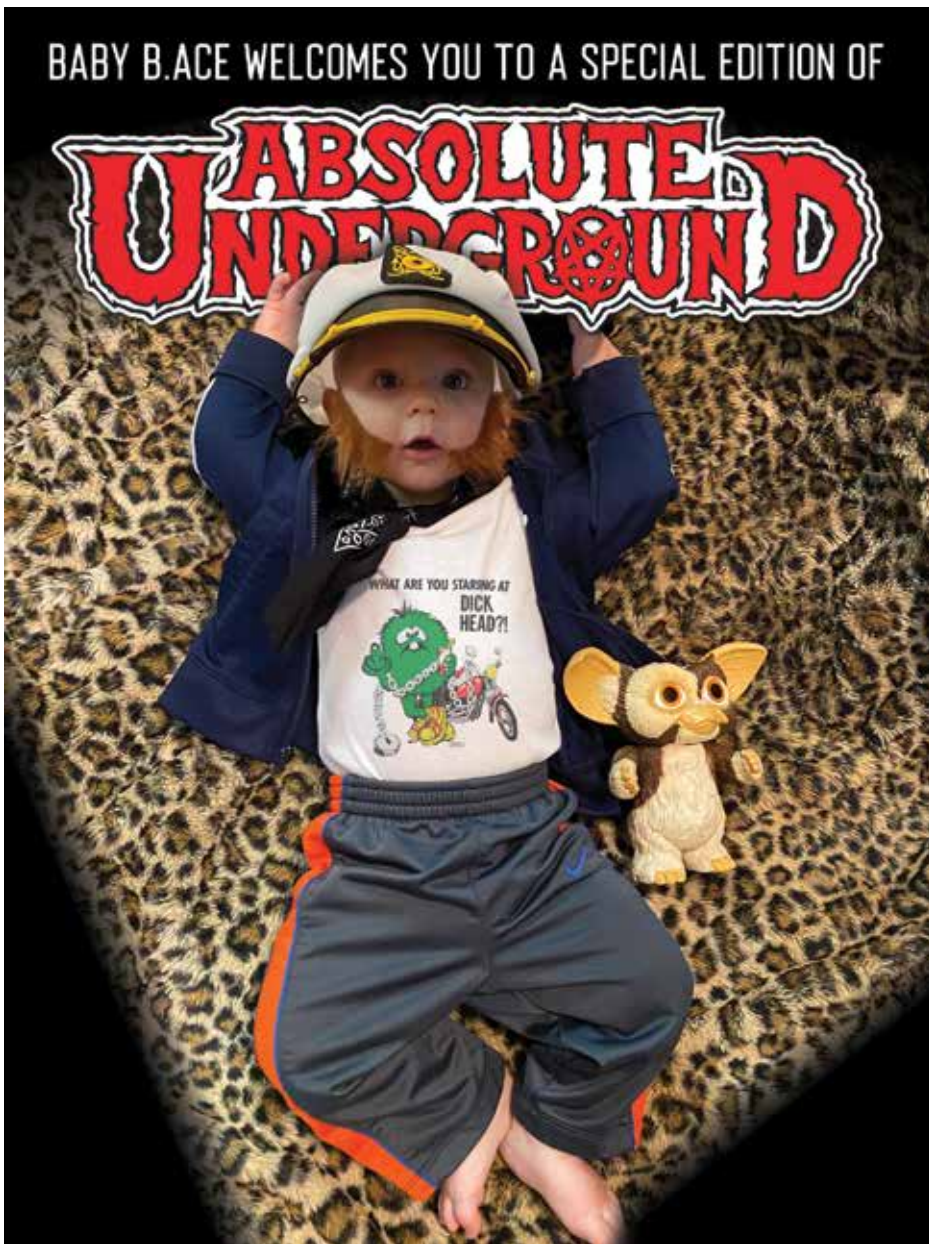
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VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY - RAZORVOICE	4
VANCOUVER VENGEANCE - DADDY ISSUES	6
WOLF RIDER	8
WAKE	9
PURE PUNK: SNUFF	10
PROP MASTERS - SHADOWWARRIOR PRODUCTIONS	11
MONTREAL MASSACRE - HOOD RATS	13
PUNKS IN RECOVERY - LISTEN TO THE RADICAL SURVIVORS	15
POWDER SEEKERS - CHARLES BECKINGSALE - JAPAN	16-17
PIRATES PRESS RECORDS - SUBHUMANS	18
STOMP RECORDS - THE DREADNOUGHTS	19
SATANIC SURFERS	20
ABSOLUTE HORROR - ALONE AND SHUDDERING IN THE DARK	22
CALGARY CARNAGE - CITIZEN RAGE	25
SHR-EDMONTON - KILL WITCH	26
PRIMITIVE MAN - 10 YEARS OF DEATHSLUDGE	28
TOP TEN EARLY SLED ISLAND METAL MOMENTS	29
FIRE!	30
INK SLINGERS - TONY IACOBELLI	31
ABSOLUTE ASIA - NINE TREASURES	32
ABSOLUTE HORROR - DIRECTOR JACK SHOLDER	33
THE INVISIBLE ORANGE - LOST NEBULA	35
CURSED BLESSINGS RECORDS	37
WRECKING CREW RECORDS - HOOKS AND BONES	39
DECIMATE METALFEST	40
CALGARY HORROR CON 2022	42
HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU - PILEDRIVER	45
HASHTRONAUT ART DEPARTMENT	46
LOUD AS HELL FESTIVAL	47
B.A. JOHNSTON - PHOTO AND ALBUM COVER COLLAGES	48-49
B.A. JOHNSTON - INTERVIEW	50-51
B.A. JOHNSTON - CAREER RETROSPECTIVE - DEEP DISH CUTS	52
ARTIST PROFILE - PAUL G. HAMMOND	54-55
VICTORIA SKA AND REGGAE FESTIVAL	57-59
THE WAILERS - ASTON BARRETT JR.	61
REBEL PRIEST - DEADWOLFF - REBEL WOLFF TOUR	62
THIRTEEN GOATS	63
SVNEATR	64
CROSSWORD BY PAUL GOTT	65
ABSOLUTE LIVE REVIEWS	66
ABSOLUTE ALBUM REVIEWS	67
FILM REVIEWS - CUFF TOP 10 PICKS	68
VHS ZONE - BLACK DOG VIDEO - PODIUM	69
ABSOLUTE COMIX - DANZIGGY - COFFEETRATATION	70
BRIAN WALSBY PRESENTS - GREG WOOD	71
ABSOLUTE MIXTAPE	72
ELEKTRIC MISTRESS	73
JIM "THE TANK" DORSEY - LORD HUMUNGUS - JOHN GRIMM	75
ABSOLUTE METAL - EYEHATEGOD PART 2	77
SUPREME ECHO - THE NOSTRILS	78
BENEATH THE WHEEL - DEADWOLFF	80
SHRED SESSION - PD'S HOT SHOP QUALICUM BEACH	82
MODERN TERROR	83
WILLIAM S. HAYES - BURDEN OF CONCRETE	84
SHADOW CABINET OF GRAYSON CALIGARI - RHEAS OBSESSION	85
BLAST FROM THE PAST - TRIUMPH	86
COMIC BOOK ICONS - SERGIO ARAGONES - PART 3	87
VOICE OF THE STREETS - TOY TIGER	88
CAVITY CURIOSITY SHOP - ANDY ANDERSON	89
DNR - DO NOT RESUSCITATE - DO NOT READ	90
COMIC-GEDDON - SPIDER PUNK - SLIPKNOT PHOTO COLLAGE	91
BREWING 101 - HOWL BREWING - HOPS	92
THE MIDWEEK MOSH	93
FALLEN SOLDIERS	94

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Razorvoice

Moments with Victoria's Razorvoice

By John Carlow

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourselves

Razorvoice: In our current live lineup, we are moving forward performing as a duo, with Ben Wittrock leading on guitar and vocals while Luke Bodi slams and rips on the drums. Unfortunately, our loud shows and rehearsals affected our latest bass player's tinnitus too much to continue, but we were very thankful for Gabriel Underwood's time of shedding out some songs! Our current bassist's name is (insert your name here).

AU: Tell us where /how band came together.

Ben: The Razorvoice project started back in 2014 when I was living in LA songwriting and assisting in studios. We played one show on Hollywood Boulevard at the MIT Concert Hall before I moved back to Powell River to take care of my mother. I set up a studio in an abandoned warehouse to work on writing and recording as a one-man army on Razorvoice's first record, *Unmute* with the NeoTek board that Trooper recorded their first three records on. Once my mother's health was back up to par, getting back to the US was difficult with visas; and due to the direction of politics America was heading towards it seemed undesirable to move back. Victoria B.C. was as California as you can get while still living in Canada so it became the new home turf to plant some roots right before the pandemic hit. Luke came into the picture in the summer of 2021 when they started renting out a back room at my shared studio space. I saw that Luke put out a call for needing to reconnect with his pop punk roots in a band. As luck would have it, I was just about to start demoing new songs for a new record the next weekend, so we started working together on recording drum parts and a live set until we could book shows again.

AU: The band name?

Ben: Razorvoice is a play on words of "Raise Your Voice", of which everyone deserves to do whether it's a fun and positive cathartic release, or more importantly if they find themselves feeling alone in a difficult situation, environment, or circumstance. Even though every individual has their own struggles to face, it's important

to be aware that there is community around to support one another who have been through identical struggles before. Thankfully, music gets to be a networking hub and outlet to connect those dots. Through the power of music, I've always felt a connection and belonging as a listener that I want to be able to give that back as a performer and writer. Growing up listening to punk and aggressive music, my "singing" voice naturally and instinctively sounded raspy as if it were cut by razors in comparison to the pure toned choir singers in my community, so I always stuck out like a sore thumb... I always believe no matter anyone's vocal tone and style, as long there is truth behind the message they're delivering, one's voice has the ability to cut through any bull shit as a sharp as a razor and everyone's truth deserves to be heard.

AU: What kind of music/ genre would you put the band into?

Ben: Grunge-Punk Folk-Pop(sicles that drip adrenalized positivity).

AU: Musical influences?

Ben: Razorvoice songs and performances are widely influenced from Gob, Jawbreaker, Green Day, The Bouncing Souls, NOFX, Rancid, blink-182, The Lawrence Arms, The Descendents, Anti-Flag, Nirvana, Hot Water Music, Dave Hause, Brian Fallon.

AU: The songwriting processes. How does it come together?

Who does words/music?

Ben: It's always different, but the songwriting usually starts from a place of solitude which leads to an awareness of a feeling, or some phrase that has a melody to it, and then simply following the flow of what should happen next. It expands from there passing through thresholds of "what would we want to hear live", "what makes us happy and what brings ourselves connection". The truth is that every song ever has already been written, and what hasn't been written already exists in the future. The trick is just quieting your mind and tuning into hearing what's already there and transmitting it into this current timeline. There have been a few new riffs that have developed from Luke and I jamming which are growing

into some new songs and energies that have been creatively ejaculating.

AU: Bands you're excited about/ who have you noticed recently?

Ben: Rest Easy from Vancouver put out a great track called "Bad Idea" to check out in anticipation of their new record, and we'll be playing an all-ages show with them here in Victoria July 22nd at the Carlton. There is an all-ages scene bubbling in Nanaimo with some really rad up and comers in a band called Danger Box. Pidgin here in Victoria just put out an EP of 4 songs that I helped record which are totally worth checking out, and I'm excited to see and hear new local Victoria releases from Anchorage Blue and poor sport. Oh! There was also a rad new release from a Nanaimo punk band called Unlabeled who sounded reminiscent of Face to Face.

AU: Your thoughts on the scene in Victoria right now?

Ben: The great thing about the scene coming out of hibernation, is that we all get to make it what we want. Victoria is hurting for accessible venues for newer artists, but within that need there will be new venues bubbling up out of necessity. It was a bummer to lose Logan's Pub, but thankfully other places such as The Phoenix Pub have opened their arms to the punk and metal community. (Thank you Jen!)

The fantastic news is fans are eager to experience live music and connection. Shout out to all the venues who have stuck out the past two years paying the bills out of their own pockets, specifically Lucky Bar. Without venues like them, we would have to be starting completely from scratch in our sweaty basements, which we'll

VICTORIA'S LOCALS ONLY

do regardless, but thankfully we still have some foundation to build upon with places like Lucky Bar.

AU: What's the future? Where would you like to see the band go?

Ben: The future is living honestly through authentically playing music we love for people who may or may not want to hear it, ha-ha. The intention is to hold a positive growth minded space for people's souls to leave their hiding places, whether that's in headphones, stereo systems or shows with other likeminded individuals at a live show. Victoria is a beautiful home base and it's great to connect the different scenes on Vancouver Island together between appreciating the old growth and back country we're all so fortunate to be around. The band will be building up the best possible live show possible to keep touring BC in prep for touring Canada, back through the states and over to the UK, Germany and Norway. We're also looking forward to finding the right producer for a new record to share a vision with, and to share these new songs with music loving souls who we're all sharing this human experience with. Regardless of what our future is, we're already so appreciative of everything that's going on and it is truly a blessing to be playing shows and share the positivity of being engaged in community together again.

www.RAZORVOICE.ca

PHOTO CREDIT: John Carlow/ Finding Charlotte Photography



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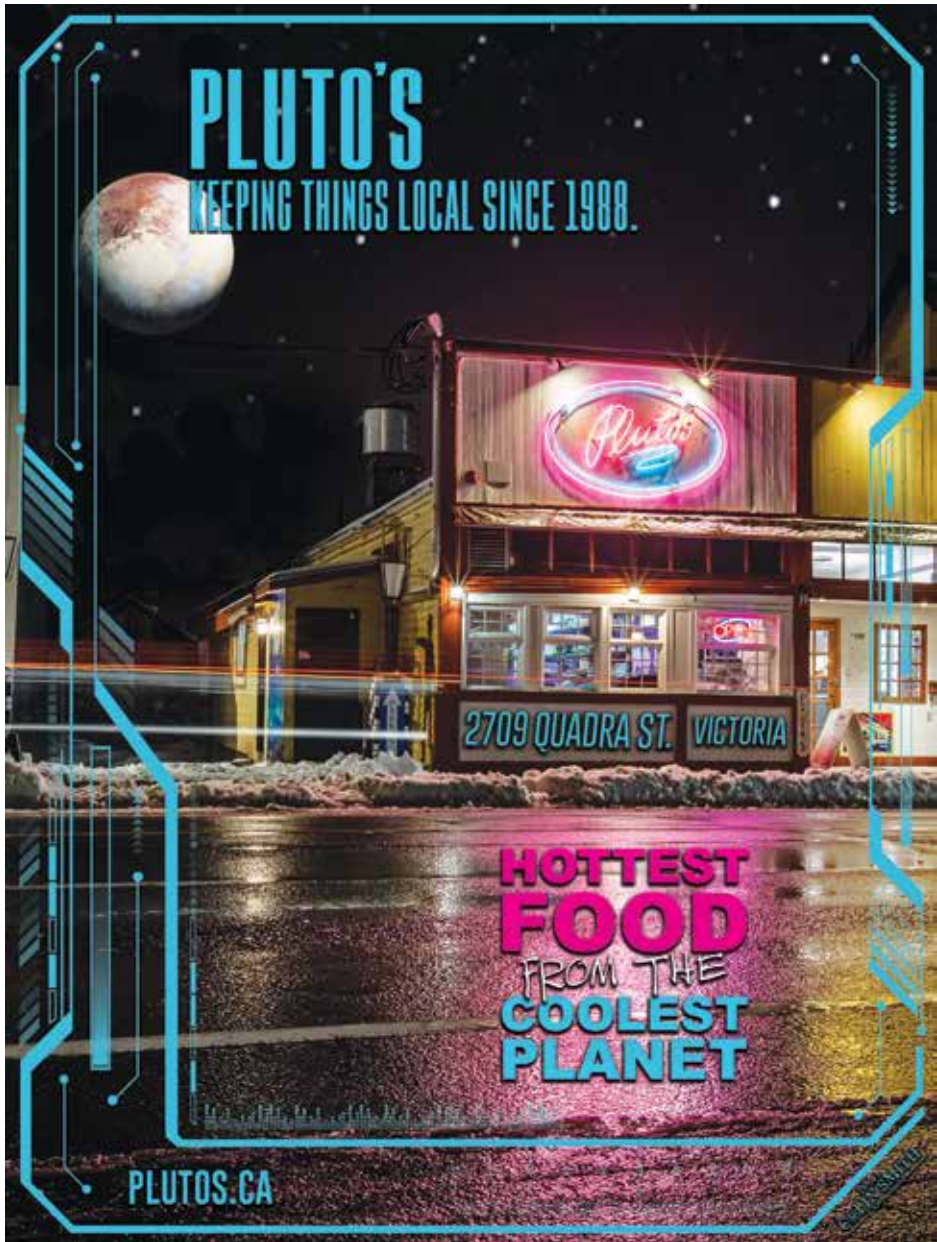
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Daddy Issues

By Heath Fenton

Daddy Issues have been putting the gonch in raunch for over ten years now. Over those years they have pulled together a great conglomeration of local punk rawk veterans to solidify as a fucked up unit (Holly Holy, Coach, Orchard Pinkish, Dr. Hook Jr, and Reggie).

Crazy unhinged live shows and debauchery have finally come tenfold as they finally got their shit together and have recorded a meaty slab of badassery soon to be unleashed on your unsuspecting, and no longer innocent ear drums. Ferociously raw, stripped down, no holds raunch and roll at the extreme is what is in store with these cool cats.

DADDY ISSUES



This is what you get with Daddy Issues. They pull no punches, they only deliver them straight to your crotch and throat. Rock and roll is not a beauty contest. But yet somehow Daddy Issues manages to deliver their package in a delightfully deranged way. Front woman Holly Holy is perhaps the most beautiful version of GG Allin you could imagine. If you can imagine such a thing. I spoke to her about the band, and this is what she had to say.

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you infamous for?

HH: Holly Holy, obnoxious vocalizer of contentious melodic uneloquence. I'm infamous for violently taking my clothes off in public and replacing them with syringes, sex toys and temporary genitalia.

AU: How did the band Daddy Issues come to life?

HH: My brother Jayme Black and I were living together in a very Magic Mike sort of storyline and over the exact right amount of whiskey shots we decided to honour the impressions left on us for the upcoming Fathers Day in the best way we knew how. With sex, drugs, rock and roll and spankings.



AU: I understand that you have finally recorded an album? What can you say about that? What is it called and when will it be available? How can people get their hands on a copy or a listen?

HH: Yes, after over ten years, an El Camino full of beers, and a crusty bedpan full of tears, we have decided to record an album so our drummer "Coach" doesn't leave us. The album is to be called *The Bad Album*, cuz it is. No copies are available until our impending CD release party,

but if you show us your boobs, feel up our bass player and buy us drinks we will probably let you listen to it.

AU: What are some of the lyrical themes that Daddy Issues covers on the new record. How did you come up with the name?

HH: Jayme Black came up with the name. Maybe cuz he was living with his stripper sister and still wearing eyeliner. Incest, rape, violence, drugs, lunch meat and the venereal diseases that come with it all. You know stuff that makes us the well rounded, multifaceted individuals we are today.

AU: Where and who did you work with on the new record?

HH: Rene D'LaMuerte Garcia of The Brains made us sound to be determined. We recorded it in the sex dungeon at

Faceplant as thats where Orchard Pinkish was working that week. So we got it on the cheap.

AU: After the album is released, what is next for Daddy Issues?

HH: Shows, prison, become immortalised through sadistic carnal acts with Satan and then more shows before we retire to a cushy place in hell.

AU: Your live show has got a definite reputation. For those of us that haven't seen Daddy Issues play live, what kind of stuff can we expect?

HH: Awkward boners, nightmares, hefty therapy bills, awakening fetishes you never dreamed possible. Shit gets weird. We dare you to like it.

AU: You in particular, shall I say, really put yourself out there when performing live. Is



VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

that something that comes natural, or is it a character within? Can you expand on that?

HH: Um yes. A few labia have "slipped" out during shows. If you're not speaking literally then it may be due to the fact that I was spewed through a river of all bodily fluids flowing from Bloody Betty's expired meat curtains and I was born without shame.

AU: How does a typical Daddy Issues song get written?

HH: Usually starts with a bottle of Jameson and enough bad intentions to destroy the Catholic Church. But halfway through, Orchard usually needs to go flog himself to repent for his weekly sins, Coach will turn on Pornhub, Dr. Hook has an "emergency appointment", Reggie Dunlop will get distracted by Coach's beard and I have spiders to feed. So it's a lengthy process at best.

AU: Are there further plans down the pipeline for Daddy Issues? Touring plans?

HH: Well, we can only plan for the recent future, based on the reality of our collective restraining orders, a recent "wanted dead or alive" campaign against us and the inevitable revealing of the skeletons in my closet. But in the meantime we got a bunch of shows coming up:

Sat July 16 - Britannia Beach music fest!

Tues July 19 - The Fox - opening for The Brains - Vancouver and other possible dates

Sat Aug 27 - Lana Lous - with La Chinga Vancouver

Sat Sept 10 (we believe) - Jaks Skate Comp

AU: Any last words?


HH: You got \$50 I can borrow?

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Wolf Rider

Interview by John Carlow

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourselves

Wolf Rider:
Randy – Vocals/Rhythm guitar
Dallas – Lead guitar/Backup vocals
Adam – Drums
Rob – Bass guitar

AU: Tell us where/how the band came together

Wolf Rider: Wolf Rider was born and raised in Victoria BC. Formed in 2008 founded by Dallas and buddy Dustin. Over the next few years shows were played, members came and went. However, when Adam and Randy joined the band, they came into their current sound. Rob joined up in 2018 after Dustin’s retirement. The band has evolved through Coronavirus. We are Heavy Metal/Hardcore/Thrash/Super Dad mix of gents that make up Wolf Rider.

AU: What kind of music/genre would you put the band into?

Wolf Rider: Metal/Metal core/Hardcore

AU: The name?

Wolf Rider: It was a song title, then it became the

name. (We don’t play that song anymore.)

AU: Musical influences?

Wolf Rider: Pantera, Parkway Drive, August Burns Red, Lamb of God, Baptists. The heavy stuff.

AU: The songwriting processes. How does it come together?

Wolf Rider: Someone brings a riff/idea to jam and we bang it out collectively. We all add our own bit of flavour to the songs. 11 Herbs and Spices.

AU: What are your songs primarily about?

Wolf Rider: Songs are about not being a dick in life. Working through shit...about getting eaten by sharks and about Elvis. Ha-ha

AU: Bands you’ve shared bills with?

Wolf Rider: Shallow End, Neck of the Woods, Pound, Param-Nesia, Liberatia, Scimitar, Parasitic Twin, Gnar Gnars, Buzzard, Klawalka, Under the Mountain, The Hex, The Mags, Mar Mar and the Grits, Thrashlord, Stinkhorn, Mechanism of Hate, October Crisis, Daisy Stranglers

AU: What would be a dream billing?

Wolf Rider: Misery Signals, Archspire, Spirit Box, Baptists, Gwar. Would be awesome to hang with these bands, too.

AU: Outstanding shows of yours you want to tell us about?

Wolf Rider: Wake of the Virus at Capital Ballroom (we opened the event). Line up was headliner Param-Nesia, (crazy tech metal!) Scimitar and Liberatia. (Just awesome!) As well the show with Neck of the Woods, (Know how to tear a room up!) Pound, and Shallow End (They fuckin rip!). It was all fucking rad!

AU: Funny/unusual incidents at a gig?

Wolf Rider: Third show ever with Randy singing, he came out way too hot and blew out his voice,

and that time he wasn’t playing guitar to hide behind. That sucked. At another show Rob broke his low “E” (we are in drop “C”) third song into the set with no back up bass or strings so that was fucked. At a Phoenix show, a drunk guy was yelling we were his fav band slips on spilled beer (by him.) Ate shit so bad you could feel it even on the drum riser. Ha ha. Hope he was ok. Feel free to come down to our shows and get unusual.

AU: What’s been happening past 2 years?

Wolf Rider: Writing music, jamming, playing some shows COVID permitting, raising kids, some skateboarding. Getting fat! ha-ha

AU: What’s the future? Where would you like to see the band go?

Wolf Rider : Keep doing what we are doing, more shows, try to hit up Van/Mainland for some shows, keep writing music and record.

AU: Your thoughts on the scene in Victoria right now.

Wolf Rider: It’s good. I think everyone is ready to rip it up now we can all play shows again. Really, Vic town has a good scene, good folk. Big thanks go out to Ben Wittrock (Razorvoice) He always helped us dial in a killer sound at the Phoenix. Razorvoice is a killer band too! Same for Gnar Gnars / Klawalka (Brains, Hoon , Gino). Big high five and thanks for their support getting gigs and jam spots over the years. Shouts to Mike Battle and Eric for recording out first demo (it’s been a while) and to the friends/family and other peeps that come out to the shows.

Gear shouts go out to Trevor at Vigilant Guitars. Julian at Marrs Audio for gear fix ups! (Especially Randy’s old school Marshall that was overhauled with magic!) Dark Glass, Traynor, GK and Fender for keeping the Bass alive and Ernie Ball strings for

helping to get to Drop “C”!

AU: Where can people find you and find your music?

Wolf Rider: We have a four-song demo from 2015 on Bandcamp and we can be found on Instagram. Currently we are working on writing new material for an upcoming album later this year. September 30th, we have a show with Liberatia and Badhumanbeings at the Phoenix.

AU: Any last thoughts?

Wolf Rider: Well, the local scene has lots of talent and music emerging. We need more venues. That being said, Jenny at the Phoenix has been unbelievably awesome and supportive to the scene. It really was shitty Logan’s bit the dust but from the ashes came the Phoenix. It’s really (Logan’s) old Thursday’s and Friday’s old



Nautilus Club connection from back in the day and that is kind of cool. (Buck a beer Mondays.) Honestly, we need to co-op or crowd share or whatever and create venues. Take the skate parks

for instance. Have an area with power, maybe a temp platform for a band to set up and play. Stream live...available permits.... etc. Make music available for everyone. Lots of young kids coming up wanting to play gigs. This would be perfect for all ages. There seems to be more gorilla type shows out there D.Y.I. like the early days of Vic. it’s a bit of a reset. Time to get dirty and rip it up! Be creative and support your scene.

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WAKE Thought Form Descent

**Interview with vocalist Kyle Ball
By Ryan Dyer**

After a few years of darkness due to the pandemic, Canada's WAKE returns in 2022 with *Thought Form Descent*, an album which presents a non-linear storyline finding the character at odds with waking life, containing themes of escapism and existentialism. The album follows up their breakthrough 2020 effort *Devouring Ruin*, which already showed progression from the band. As they are ever-evolving, WAKE make sure to not tread the exact same waters as *Ruin*, presenting new musical approaches to accompany the lyrical content. We catch up with vocalist Kyle Ball on the verge of the album's release, which will see WAKE hitting the road once again across Canada in late July/early August in support of the album.

Absolute Underground: I first caught WAKE



during the 2011 Sled Island festival in Calgary. At the time, you had a different lineup but I knew the band would go on to be something special. Could you talk a little about the journey WAKE has had to make it to this point?

KB: Back in the grind days, we had a fairly steady revolving door of members up until we recorded *Misery Rites*. There were a lot of people and a lot of different influences going into making the best grindcore records we could earlier on, which moved into deathgrind with the release of *Misery Rites*. Once Ryan joined on bass after that record was released, we have had the most solid line up of people and players WAKE has ever had. After the release of *Misery Rites*, a lot of our tastes and influences had changed and we wanted to explore a lot of different kinds of music and soundscapes, and that's when we started writing *Devouring Ruin*. *Devouring Ruin* was an interesting album for us, it saw us expanding songs into 10+ minute territory, the songwriting got grosser, but also prettier, and the lyrical content had fully moved away from anything political. The border had closed less than a week before the album was released and we were supposed to meet up with Origin, Beneath the Massacre and Defeated Sanity in Texas. Due to the pandemic, that release ended up seeing absolutely no touring at all. During this time, we released our "Confluence" EP and the guys started writing the music for our new record *Thought Form Descent*.

We wrote the entirety of *Thought Form Descent* during the pandemic when everything was still basically in lock down, so we had nothing but time to work on it. We traveled to Colorado and spent three weeks with Dave Otero at Flatline Audio in September of 2021, shot a music video for our single "Swallow the Light" with our good friend Michael Davidson, which

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saw release in May, and now we're impatiently awaiting the album release on July 22.

AU: Thought Form Descent comes from the non-linear fiction story that unfolds in the lyrics. When did the story manifest? Did it come within the COVID downtime, was it an idea that came up during the music writing process or something else?

KB: The story did manifest during COVID. There were a lot of things that went into me shifting from views on society, personal issues, etc, and wanting to write a fiction based story. I found myself in a pretty bad place through a lot of the pandemic - I was fighting with depression, habits, people, you name it. The outside world was shit, the online world was shit, vitriol was being spat from every corner of everywhere and coupled with what I was dealing with, and things were looking bleak in the worst ways possible. I needed some form of escapism, I didn't have it in me to focus on all of these things then turn around and record them and sing about them, perpetually beating a dead horse that was already beating me down... I think there's a lot of other bands that have that covered anyways. The guys were probably halfway through demoing the songs for me at this point, and after struggling with content, the idea popped in my head and I started writing the story.

AU: I know you are a big fan of horror films. Are there any recent films (horror or not) which have inspired either your lyrics or some of the themes/atmosphere of the album?

KB: Movies like *Hellraiser*, *The Void*, *The Beyond*, *Altered States*... Any movie that displaces reality for another plane of existence has probably planted seeds for the lyrics of this record, but no movie itself could be cited as a main influence.

This time I was delving into my imagination for the main influence, psychedelics, and reading a lot of books, mostly by John C. Lilly, Carl Jung, and Aldous Huxley.

AU: The artwork for this record was done by Samantha Muljat. Her work has a unique and rather mysterious feeling, reminding me of films like *Picnic at Hanging Rock*. What was your motive for choosing her and this piece?

KB: We chose Samantha because we felt her artwork would properly represent the visual side of what we were trying to convey. The songs are a lot more ethereal and almost psychedelic, just like her art, so she felt like a perfect fit.

AU: Kevin Hufnagel from Gorguts makes an appearance on a couple of songs for this album. "Pareidolia" is a fairly melodic number and "Observer to Master" is quite ambitious, frantic and progressive. Did he come to you first with the proposal or did you have him in mind prior?

KB: Rob has known Kevin for quite a few years now and I'm pretty sure he had asked Kevin

about 3/4s of the way through demoing if he'd be into laying down a solo or potentially a bit more. "Observer" is one of my personal favorite tracks on this album and the solo Kevin did is so gross and perfect.

AU: You've played a few big festivals such as Obscene Extreme, but there has to be something more on your hit list. What is next for WAKE to conquer and devour?

KB: Hell Fest, Wacken, Oblivion Access, Full Terror Assault, Psycho Las Vegas, ANYWHERE! I'm not kidding - book us, bring us anywhere and everywhere.

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SNUFF

Insert Ridiculously Long Title Here

Interview with guitarist Loz Wong - Part 1
by Ira Hunter and Ty Stranglehold

AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

LW: Hey. I'm Loz Wong. I've been the guitarist for Snuff since October 1995 and I am currently known for cycling a lot and reading comics.

AU: Where did you grow up and how did you first discover Punk Rock?

LW: I grew up in North West London, in a place called Northolt. I first discovered punk rock around 1984 from a random mixtape given to me by a mate. This tape had The Damned, The Clash, Buzzcocks, The Jam, and other Brit punk bands on it. I was 16 years old and immediately hooked.

AU: What was the scene like there?

LW: Back in the day (early eighties), there were maybe two of what you'd call proper punks in my local area but they were a bit dodgy and probably glue sniffers. I didn't engage. So no local punk scene to speak of but nationally there was a shit load of punk rock in the live music scene, which I eventually found about via word of mouth and fanzines that crossed my path.

I guess the first proper punk show I went to was



to see the Subhumans in a pub in Farringdon near Kings X, this was around their "Rats" single era. We were all under age at the time but nobody cared.

From there we discovered the London gig scene and continued to go to as many DIY shows as we could because this was the only real subculture at the time, we just really dug the music and chaos.

For me personally, I really liked the politics of punk rock at the time in so far as certain aspects such as the anti-apartheid action,

anti-fascist and anti-nuclear stance was all a big deal to me back then, this was because we grew up in Thatcher's 1980's Britain and that was pretty fucking grim if you were young and working class so punk rock was a clear way for us to rail against the bullshit social politics of that awful era over here, Punk rock became an antidote to the poison we were being fed by the establishment.

AU: Give us a brief history of your band SNUFF.

LW: The band started in 1986 as a three piece. Duncan Redmonds on vocals and drums, Simon Wells on vocals and guitar and Andy Creighton on bass. This line up was very successful and gigged a huge amount, making a name for themselves with incredible live performances featuring their brand of punk/soul/mod shenanigans, BBC radio sessions and cracking debut album.

Later adding Dave (Duncan's older brother) on Trombone for the odd tune, this would be around the "Flibbedeedibydeedob" EP time and then Steve on Hammond organ around the *Reach* album time. This line-up lasted until 1991 and then went on indefinite hiatus.

In this time members branched off and did other bands as well as swapping instruments too, Guns and Wankers (Duncan - drums to guitar), Leatherface (Andy - still on bass) and Your Mum (Simon - guitar to drums).

The original Snuff line-up reformed in early 94' and went on tour whilst writing the tracks for the *Demmassabebonk* album. At this stage Lee Murphy had joined the band on Hammond organ. Simon left the band in late 1995 and Andy followed in 1996. I joined as guitarist in late 1995 and ended up recording the *Demmassabebonk* album as my first role in the band.

AU: Describe the band's sound.

LW: Punk/Soul/Mod, not particularly in that order. We don't follow any particular "formula" consciously and we love to mix genres and styles at any given opportunity.

AU: What makes Snuff's approach to music unique?

LW: I will say we have a "no idea is a bad idea" approach and we'll work through ideas rather than bin them off and I'd say the new album, the way that was written, represents a real change in the way we have written albums in the past. We wrote this one as three piece so that the songs could stand strong without the accoutrements and this forced us to really focus on vocals and arrangements and I feel this was all for the betterment of the album and the band in general.

AU: Tell us more about the new album.

LW: It's called *Crepuscolo Dorato Della Bruschetta Borsetta Calzetta Cacchetta Trombetta Lambretta Giallo Ossido, Ooooooh Così Magnifico*, Released on SB&M records out of Austria and 10 Past 12 Records here in the U.K.

It's a total banger and I think it's the best thing I've ever recorded personally. It is 10 new punk/soul/mod tunes (one cover) written during lockdown and recorded at Perry Vale studios with the genius producer Pat Collier.

AU: What's the title of the new album mean?

PURE PUNK

LW: It doesn't really mean anything although its loosely based on an old Lambretta scooter Duncan used to own (I think). Also it's Italian which is clearly the greatest of all languages.

AU: Does your latest album explore any particular themes or topics?

LW: Duncan is the main lyricist in the band. In my opinion his word-smithery is proper top draw. On this last record, which was as I mentioned written during lockdown, the themes are slightly darker e.g. songs about mortality, mental health issues, society and anti-war themes and a good dose of satirizing the status quo (not the rock band).

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

LW: All of them really. It was a proper pleasure to write and record this album, as it is to play the new songs live. I will say I am particularly pleased with the instrumental "Barbar Gelata" (which means frozen beard in Italian), as this was written by me but arranged together with the lads. It was my first bash at an instrumental and it pretty much came out as I had first imagined so that was a huge plus point for me. I'm calling it "punk manga metal" style as I can see it being the soundtrack to some sort of epic manga Gundan battle or in some fucked up anime. I also love "One Of Those Days," it has a fantastic vocal melody and Duncan really hit the heights when he wrote that one!

AU: My friend Ty Stranglehold wanted to ask: The long album title, why is it back after so many years?

LW: I guess the answer to that is why not? We don't take ourselves so seriously that we need to have an album title that "truly reflects the inner feelings of the band" and all that flim flam. I'll take ridiculously silly titles all day over the serious ones.

www.snuffband.com
snuffuk.bandcamp.com

To Be Continued Next Issue...



Shadowwarrior Productions

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

RI: My name is Rick Illi, a local Victoria boy, as for what I am best known for... I am afraid that is classified. Seriously though, I have just started my second career building cosplay safe, custom foam props, custom costumes and I also build Dream Rooms. So if you want to recreate the Death Star, Millenium Falcon or the Enterprise in your own home...I can build it.

AU: When and how did you first get involved with the world of special effects and props?

RI: I have always been interested in making fun things, since I was a kid... Halloween has always been my most favorite holiday. I am very fortunate to have been blessed with an abundance of creativity and have been developing my practical skills over many years to

bring things up to this next level. And...after a 35 year career, my wife told me I had to get another job so...I decided to dive headfirst into this business venture.

AU: What sorts of materials do you work with?

RI: I work with a wide variety of materials like Styrofoam, MDF and some wood but my primary, and most favorite, is EVA Foam. This is the same material as the anti-fatigue floor mats you can buy. The lions-share of my commissions are for folks in the Cosplay community so weight, durability and high detail is paramount and this is where the versatility of EVA foam really shines.



AU: What are some of the cooler projects you have worked on in the past?

RI: As a life-long *Star Trek* fan, (yes, I can be called a Trekkie) I have made a few Klingon Bat'Leth swords, particularly, the Sword of Kah'Less. Another popular item is my version of Harley Quinn's big mallet. The Legend of Zelda, Hylian Shield and Master Sword is ridiculously popular! Outside of custom props and custom costumes I make, I also build 'Dream Rooms'. My last room build was a full-size, 360 degree Bat Cave TV room for a family in Alberta. Entry into this batcave is through a hidden

door in a book shelf.

AU: What makes your work unique in your opinion?

RI: All of my prop building and costume creations are ALL hand made. A razor blade and Dremel tool are my go-to tools. No mass productions or 3D printing. I work closely with my customers to ensure their vision is turned into a reality. As I mentioned, the majority of my work is for the Cosplay community and there are A LOT of rules and regulations around cosplay. Everything I design and build meet or exceed these rules. I pride myself on putting out high quality, high durability product that are hyper-realistic and ComiCon safe.

AU: Will you be exhibiting at any conventions in the near future?

RI: YES! I just finished my very first convention at the Calgary FanExpo in April. I have secured a booth at the inaugural "GrandeCon" convention in Grande Prairie, Alberta this July and already have a booth for the Capital City ComiCon convention in Victoria in September! Exciting times ahead!

AU: Any upcoming projects to share with us?

RI: I am currently working on two, full custom costume commissions for "Geralt of Rivera" from the *Witcher* series, a full Viking Warrior Princess armour too but I am in the pre-construction phase of organizing a Medieval Castle Dream Room build! Stone, heavy timbers and Dragons! very exciting.

AU: What is the ultimate project you've always wanted to work on?

RI: I have been asked to design a home office renovation to resemble the Bridge of the original



Enterprise. As a proud Trekkie, this is close to my heart. MY ultimate project would be to recreate the entire set of the original Enterprise... Bridge, sickbay, transporter room... that long curved hallway...yup, I am a nerd.

AU: How do people find you online if they

want to have you create something for them? website, facebook, etc?

RI: I have a website at www.shadowwarriorproductions.com I have Instagram and Facebook pages too, all under the same name, Shadowwarrior Productions.





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and is a true road warrior. Guillaume Tremblay (drums) playing with us is amazing cause he's a hurricane of unstoppable energy, the type of energy you want to see in a live show.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

TS: We play 80s style punk rock with late 70's leather jacket rock and roll attitude. It's the type of music you'd listen to late at night around a trash can fire under a bridge. Sorry, no love songs here! Our songs are about the struggles of life & most of them are under two minutes. If you're a fan of Motörhead and Circle Jerks we should party together.

AU: Describe your live show verbally if you can.

TS: Our first couple of live shows this year were free "B.Y.O.B." parties packed with headbangers. It was wild as hell. I swear at our last show some dude was riding a shopping cart around while we played. His friends started pushing him in circles around the pit, when he finally fell over they all started stomping on the shopping cart till it had a massive dent on the side. You know... Good energy.

AU: What's the punk and metal scene like in Montreal these days? Any other killer bands we should check out?

TS: The thing I noticed about Montreal is there are new bands popping up everywhere. If there's a new band that's never played a show before check them out. Chances are they're having fun. It's new and exciting and they don't care about how much money they make or how many people come. That's why I love playing in Hood Rats, jamming is fun for us no matter what the circumstances. We play to have a good time. We're

MONTREAL MASSACRE

our own party and enjoy every second of it.

AU: Anything else to promote?

TS: We recorded an LP's worth of material in a killer studio last month that will be available on vinyl in 2023. We had to share a couple demo tracks early on our Bandcamp, they were too good to keep a secret. Tracks include "Repo Man", "Land Back" and my personal favorite "Fuck the Police". You can see us perform live in Montreal on July 21st at Quai des Brumes. Life's too short to

stay home, come to our show and party with us! Also check out: "Boids" Andy's band, and "Positive I.D." my other group.

hoodrats.bandcamp.com
[instagram.com/hoodratsband](https://www.instagram.com/hoodratsband)

Hood Rats

Interview with Tony Salador (Guitar and Vocals) by Paget Williams

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most notorious for?

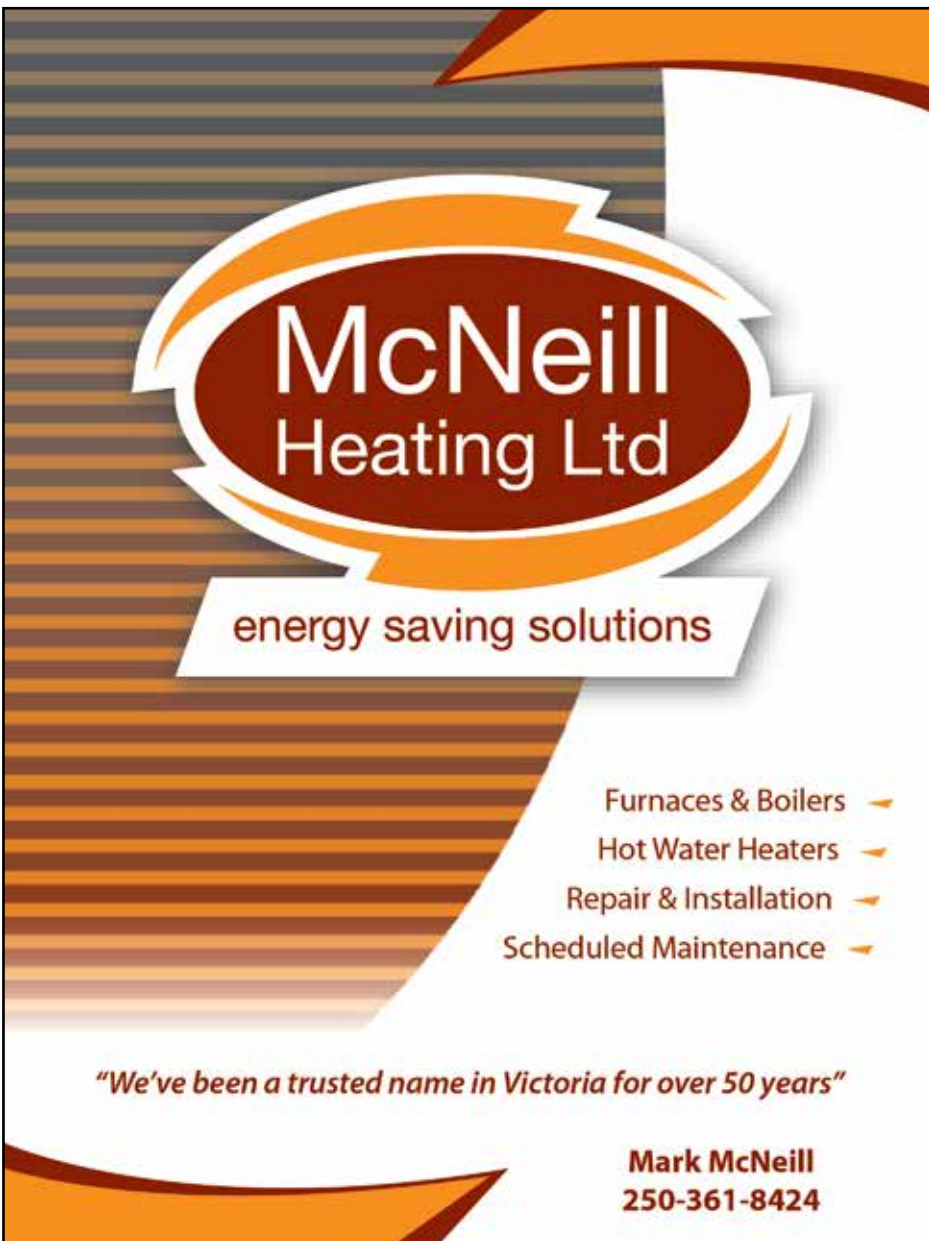
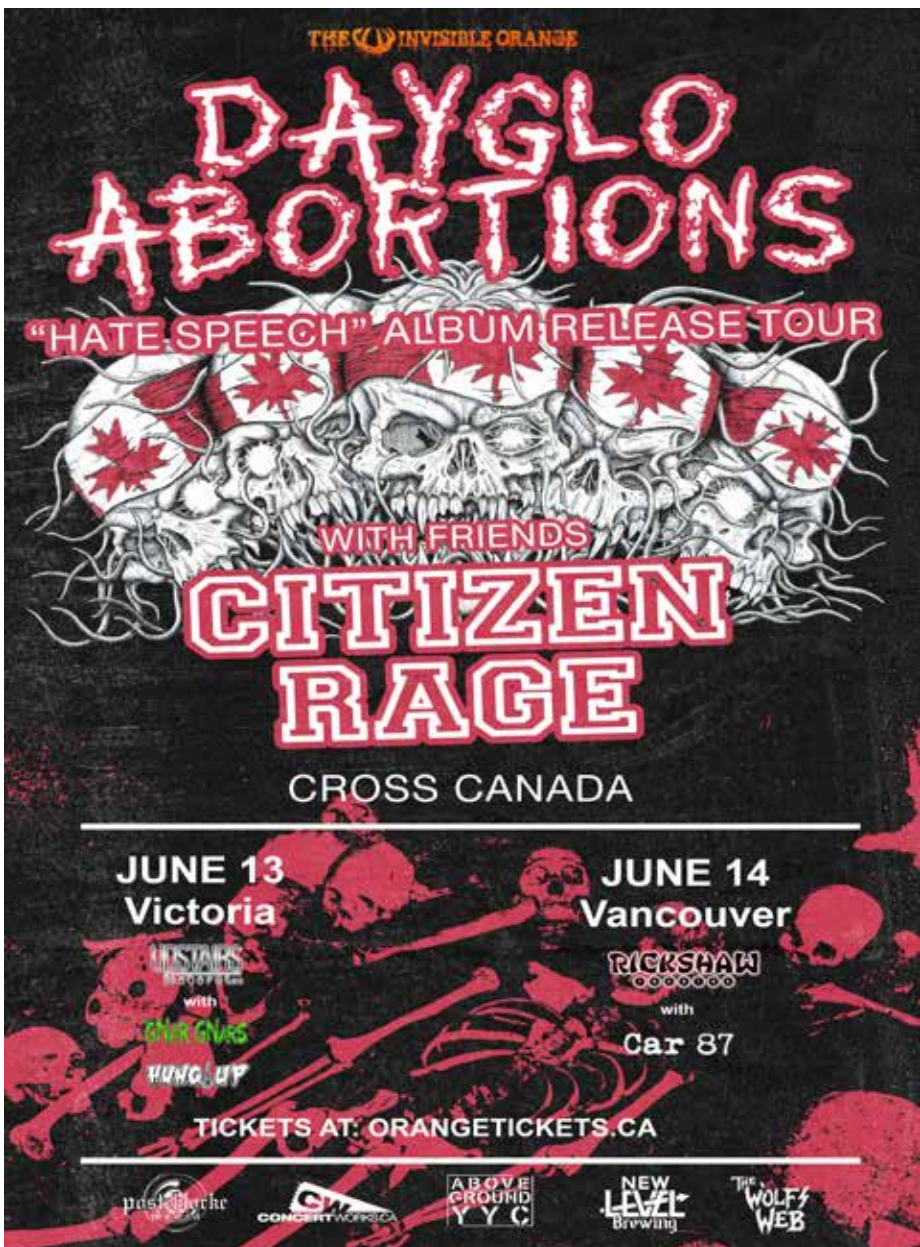
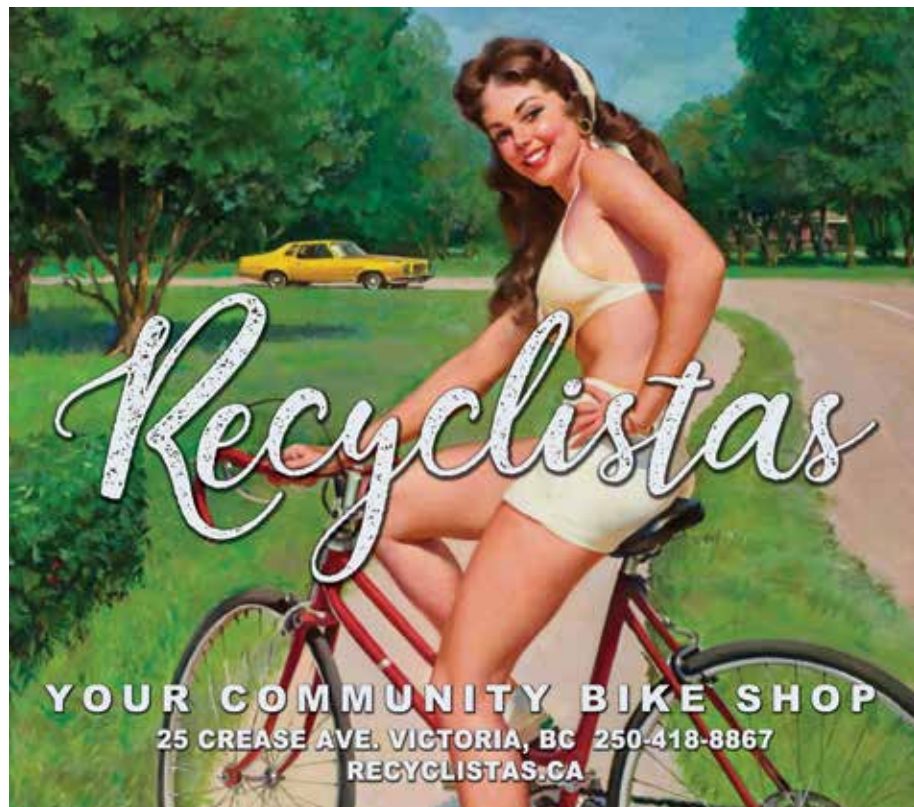
TS: Hey what's happening *Absolute Underground*. My name is Tony Salador. I play guitar and sing in a band from Montreal called Hood Rats.

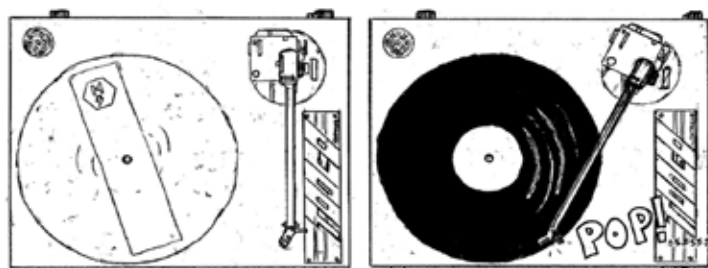
AU: Give us a brief history of your band. Did you start the band for the sex, the drugs, or the rock n roll? Or all of the above?

TS: I started Hood Rats after being sober for an entire year. I was totally bored out of my head. I missed the wild chaos of my party days and needed an outlet for my frustration, I thought learning to play drums could help fill the void. It worked out so well that I became obsessed and started living in my jam spot. I would record demos all night like a madman. In retrospect, it was pretty messed up living in a tiny room with constant noise and no windows.

AU: Who else is in the band and what are their superpowers?

TS: I'm lucky to have found some old pals to back me up on this project. Andy McAdam (Bass guitar) has played with a number of touring acts





HASHTRONAUT ART DEPARTMENT



IN THE SHADOWS OF THE MEGA-PYRAMIDS

As told by Hashtronaut Rex Xilla, Hashtronaut Corps, #137

It is the third era of Fuzz. Dates have been eradicated; estimations place these events around 322 Y.A.F.

It is the aftermath of a galaxywide war that laid waste to all of civilization. Star systems once lush and full of life had been reduced to nothing but dead worlds with charred skies and ash heaps for terrain. The worlds spared this fate, were few, and even those few, were not untouched.

Those who lived through it on one of those luckier planets, had endured a cornucopia of war savagery: orbital bombings that turned continents into craters, cluster lasers that strafed cities into criss-crosses of white-hot ruin, dropships blacking out the suns of agrarian planets, and fuzz strike missiles that would rip a whole 200 deck ship into space waste within seconds.

The survivors of this conflict earned themselves a new nightmare...

The wastelands of their homeworlds.

Under the twin dying suns of Aegeus Prime, most of the population found themselves inhabiting a new type of world, one of acrid dust storms and horrifically mutated creatures. A violent and caustic world, without rule or ruler.

Yet, there is safety from the wasteland, in the Mega-Pyramids.

Built by Aegeus Prime's elite leadership caste many years ago during a previous war, a Mega-Pyramid is a borderline indestructible superstructure that contains within it a gargantuan hive city of uncountable levels, completely self-contained and self-sufficient. The idea was that all of the planet's populaces would be able to hide within these cities should conflict come to strangle the life of the galaxy once more.

Unfortunately, Aegeus Prime has grown considerable since the initial construction of these cities, and now those within, see no reason to willingly let in those who weren't there to begin with.

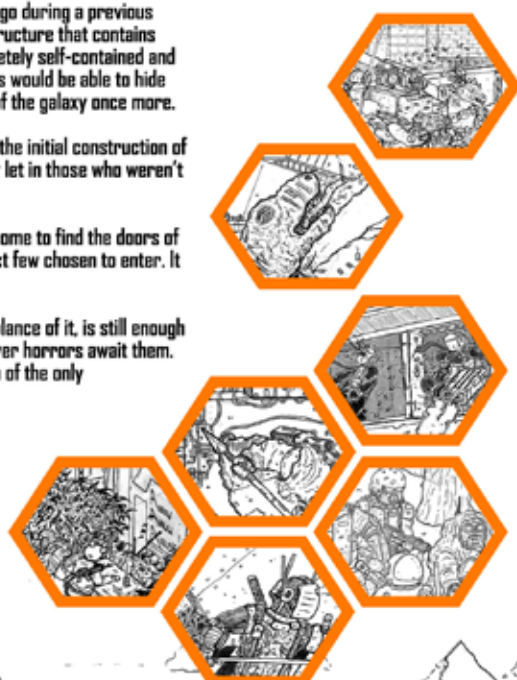
Tides of refugees brave the dangers of the wastes, only to come to find the doors of their perceived safe havens closed to them, and only a select few chosen to enter. It is here, at the giant gates, that a transient city has grown.

The mere idea of safety and civilization, or at least the semblance of it, is still enough to draw survivors brave enough to forge on through whatever horrors await them. Among one such party, is a Hashtronaut and their ward, two of the only Hashtronauts to survive The Sundering of Orange.

They seek a way to enter Mega Pyramid 3.

Impossible or not. It must be done.

For a Hashtronaut knows no failure...



Listen to the Radical Survivors

A Column by Gregorio Lewis

I am a Gringo from Boston, Massachusetts and I live deep in the heart of Mexico. In 2013, I picked up a copy of *Absolute Underground* when I was visiting Victoria and Vancouver, giving "Punk Rock, Mental Health and Recovery" talks. Thanks to all the amazing people I met in Victoria, Vancouver, Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City, Sherbrooke, Trois Rivières and Shawinigan.

After nearly 10 years of on and off communication, myself and the mighty *Absolute Underground* are collaborating now to bring to some real talk to the people who may need it, about staying well and keeping your head above water during these incredibly trying and challenging times.

I spent the entire pandemic living in an isolated mountain town in the south of Mexico. I may have lived in one of the safest, healthiest, most calm and least restrictive places in the world. I was a recent immigrant, only living here for 7 months before the world went crazy and I had nowhere to return to in the United States, so me and my terrible Spanish, stayed and lived and integrated and now I have been here for three years.

Many people say I am lucky that I live here. Well, I reject the concept of luck. What I am is extremely fortunate to live here. I arrived in Mexico with nothing other than a small backpack and ripped clothes. I choose to give myself a chance at life. This was hard and it is hard.

And this is why I have the nerve and perhaps, depending on your perspective, the arrogance to speak truths as I see fit, especially when what I share can have a helpful impact on the lives of others. I bet that you, the person reading this, or someone that you know, during the past three years, experienced something traumatic and devastating; a loss, a hurt, a violation, a trauma, something that changed you.

No one survived this pandemic unscathed. Not me, Not you. Not no one.

I have a nickname, "Crusty Craig." That is what

PUNKS IN RECOVERY



most people knew me by during most of my years as a Crusty Punk back in the states. Before the pandemic, an event that caused the lives of every person reading this to struggle (and for some, collapse), this writer already understood what it meant to have your life collapse.

There are all sorts of degrees of life destruction; some are more devastating than others. As a radical survivor myself, I listen to the other radical survivors, whenever I am ready to transform myself again.

Listen to the experts! Listen to homeless people! Listen to addicts! Listen to the Sex Workers! Listen

to Crazy People! Listen to those who became wise before we all had to become wise.

Whatever you do, never let anyone tell you that there is something so broken about you that you cannot get better!

Whatever you do, never let anyone tell you that you are not worthy of love and never let anyone tell you that you are worthless!

Whatever you do, never let anyone tell you that you cannot be happy! You can be happy!

Listen to the radical survivors, the ones that society does not want!

Listen to the radical survivors; maybe we know something about life that can benefit you.

Gregorio Lewis is the author of 'The Craig Lewis Guide To Surviving the Impossible' and the editor/publisher of 'You're Crazy' Volume Two - an anthology storybook written by punk rockers from all over the world sharing of their personal experiences of surviving, living with and recovering from mental health, addiction and trauma.

Sanityisafulltimejob.org

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PHOTO CREDIT: Natasha Acephalous Bontempo





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Powder Seekers

Interview with Master Terrain Park Builder,
Charles Beckinsale – Part 2

by Ira “Big Air” Hunter

Absolute Underground: How did you transition from professional snowboarder into becoming one of the best park builders? Did you start building jumps because you were in the backcountry and you wanted to get a good shot filming?

Charles Beckinsale: I think the riding background was super helpful. Actually knowing how to ride the jumps and stuff you’re building was pretty key, I think. But as far as getting into the park building, I got injured a couple of times when I was having a growth spurt around 16. To fill my time up and still hang with my friends we’d drag rails or just scrap steel out to the golf course in Thredbo and set up these rails. I had one arm in a sling and with my spare hand I’d shape kickers with a shovel and look after the rail. Kind of like the groundskeeper. Once I got a chance to go overseas, I was about 16 at the time, I went to Whistler and obviously the the park there is insane. The jumps were massive and that was why I went so I could ride big jumps.

Then when I came home the park scene here in Australia was pretty bad. It just hadn’t really evolved. I had been at Whistler and seen what it could be. So I basically volunteered on the park crew to help build and help shape things and that kind of stuff. After a few years doing that, I got a paid job and I would spend my winters at home working on the park crew. The rest of the year I’d be in Whistler riding and filming. So



I kind of got the best of both worlds. I’d be a snowboarder doing media stuff when I was away for six months a year and then when I come home for the four months of winter, I’d work on the park crew and try to hone my skills on that stuff. Then it got to the point where I’d sit in the snowcat and explain to the cat drivers how I wanted the jump to look.

Back then they’d just push a pile of snow for the takeoff and we’d have to get out and shape it all up by hand. The landings weren’t winched so they were pretty dogshit. From that point one of the cat drivers at Thredbo who was really cool was like, “You should get in a cat and learn how to drive them because then you don’t have to explain it to old people like me, you can just build exactly what’s in your head.” So I ended up going to California, I was about 21, and I got a start park building. Just grooming at first actually, just running the machines, grooming runs just to get the hang of it at Squaw Valley. I think it’s now called Palisades Tahoe. It was the second

year I got a chance to start grooming the park and building jumps. I think I excelled quite quickly because I already had the experience of sitting down with people that were good builders and seeing how they shaped jumps. From there if you understand how it’s done and if you can operate the machine properly you can do it yourself. It had a pretty quick progression curve which was really good. Then eventually I got the chance to jump in a cat at home and start building. From there my riding took a hit because I was just obsessed with being in the cat and trying to build cool shit.

AU: We went to Squaw Valley, that’s where they filmed Hot Dog The Movie. My friend Brydon

is obsessed with Hot Dog The Movie.

CB: Oh yeah, it’s pretty sick down there. Free riding is epic. People are pretty aggressive though about getting their lines in, nothing can get in their way.

AU: We happened to be there during like the storm of the century. There was snow over the bullwheels of some of their chairs lifts. It was pretty wild.

CB: Wow. That place had a few bad years recently

snow-wise but when I was there it was just like nuking snow. I had a truck and a sled in the back country around Lake Tahoe. It was so fun on the powder days. There was one March we had like three feet of snow every day. There was a run there called Granite Chief Peak that we would treat like a terrain park after the first few days because we got to hit all the big drops. Then we started doing tricks on them because everyday you’d come back and there was another three feet of snow on them. You got more confident and more familiar with them, so by the end of that month we were just tricking every cliff there with the hardest shit. It kind of became like the terrain park for us because the parks just kept getting buried and you couldn’t ride them.

AU: What is the secret to building the perfect jump?



CB: Having good transitions. Having long transitions that put you in the air smoothly and most people just want to land with like no impact on the landing and not too much speed so they can try tricks with confidence. So for me the perfect jump would be a true table style jump with a nice long steep takeoff that you can get a lot of air time on.

AU: Do you build half-pipes as well?

CB: I don’t. At Stomping Grounds Projects we employ Jeremy Carpenter to do that. He used to work at Perisher, which is kind of funny. Like a lot of the Stomping Grounds crew used to work at Perisher at its prime. We just kind of got that crew back together and made the magic

POWDER SEEKERS



Photo Credit: Dean “Blotto” Gray

elsewhere. Jeremy is considered the best pipe cutter in the world. He does the halfpipe at LAAX in Switzerland.

AU: What was the best epic powder day you ever experienced?

CB: Probably in Japan. In Myoko, that kind of area, I can’t remember the exact name of the resort but there was some really good powder, it was insane.

AU: I love Japan. I found bottomless powder in the backcountry there.

CB: Yeah. We went hiking off the side of the roads in a lot of places too. Got to hit some pretty big, interesting step down jumps. It’s just incredible, there’s not that many places where you see that kind of snow. Switzerland too gets insane powder snow. Places like Saas-Fee and Zermatt. I feel like no one really goes to Saas-Fee because it’s kind of shady and a bit of a hole. There’s glaciers up top, everything is really steep and it’s kind of gnarly. But that place gets insane snow. It’s like a real fluffy champagne type of powder and the same with Zermatt. I rode Zermatt in April one year and

just rode pow off to the side of their groomed runs the whole time. It’s just different.

AU: Yeah, we noticed that in Europe no one goes off piste so there’s all this powder just sitting there waiting for the Canadians or the Australians to ride it.

CB: Oh totally, but I feel like it’s getting a bit better and people are kind of catching on. With new ski shapes and stuff like that you see a few more people going off piste but I mean you can definitely score pow in places like Switzerland a bit

easier than you can at places in North America.

To be continued next issue...

stompinggroundspj.com





Subhumans

Interview by Chuck Andrews

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most known for?

D: Hello, it's Dick here, singer for the Subhumans- which is [I hope!] what I'm most known for.

AU: What first got you into punk rock? What was the scene like where you grew up?

D: Hearing it on the radio, mainly through John Peel's weeknight shows, and the fact that it condensed all the fast bits of what I'd liked previously, AND sang about actual existing things- it was realistic and exciting. The local scene was small, like most were: here in west Wiltshire we had several bands started up by 1980, ie Subhumans, Organised Chaos and AHeads, and each town had one or two venues who'd put on

punk gigs.

AU: What is the origin story of your band Subhumans?

D: When we first met [at an Angelic Upstarts gig] I was in The Mental, Bruce and Andy in Stupid Humans, and Grant in Audio Torture, all local bands with only a few gigs under our belts. By

August 1980 all three had split up, and Subhumans came into existence.

AU: Subhumans are re-releasing their entire back catalogue of albums on Pirates Press Records soon, correct?

D: As soon as we can finish the artwork and record pressing. The albums will be coming out both separately and in a box set.

AU: Are there going to be updated inner sleeves, extra liner notes and additional songs or is it just a re-release?

D: The original art will be 98% the same, the music 100%, and the only addition [in the box set] in terms of format will be a 10"

repress of the 'Unfinished Business' EP/CD. There will also be a booklet with diary entries written during the times we were in the studio making these records.

AU: Were these albums previously on vinyl?

D: Yes. They first came out on our own Bluurg

Records, in the 80s. Which should raise the question, "Why are they not staying on Bluurg then?" and that is down to Bluurg releases having been distributed and manufactured by Southern Records/Distribution, up to the point a few years ago where Southern stopped re-pressing the albums... and stopped paying out royalties.. and answering emails.. and refused to let us rerelease our music until we'd signed a contract saying they owed us nothing, forever. [Note to bands- always pay for your own studio recordings! As whoever pays for them owns them]. Southern are now defunct, and I'm crap at managing a label, and PPress are good people, so- result!

AU: My favourite Subhumans album is still EP-LP that I bought on CD 25 years ago, will it be included in the re-releases?

D: No. Oh hang on, Yes! Of course! [I was on the verge of crossing the line into flippancy by declaring that album as having had stereosynchronous tone fluctuations during tracks 5, 8 and 10, making it unlistenable...but didn't].

AU: You guys are finally getting a chance to tour the west coast of the USA this summer. That is a make-up tour for one that was cancelled in 2020 right? Anything to add about this tour?

D: Yes, first US tour since that April 2000 one got cancelled by Covid [and, er, not being allowed to fly anywhere]- it isn't the same routing as that tour, but up and down the west coast, which, at

PIRATES PRESS RECORDS



the time of deciding that, was the least insanely Covid-ridden area in the States. If we make the whole journey without getting Covid... well, that's the plan anyway. Pointless waiting for a disease to vanish before we get touring again, or we'll never go anywhere!

AU: Crisis Point (2019) is the last Subhumans studio album, anything you would like to say about it?

D: That was a set of songs that were largely invented in the weeks running up to recording them [we don't have the luxury of regular practices, as drummer Trotsky lives in Germany, and the rest of us don't]- which meant they were raw and undeveloped, for better or worse...almost any point in time since the birth of



capitalism could have inspired the title *Crisis Point*, but it was horribly apt in 2019, and more so in the years since.

AU: When did you become aware of the Canadian band also called Subhumans? What did you think when you first heard their music?

D: That would've been in 1981, I think, when Canada was so far away it could've been another planet, we didn't think we'd ever be flying to gigs and there was no worry about having the same name, and by that point they had split up anyway. Their songs were good solid punk rock!

AU: Anything else you would like to touch on before you go?

D: Stop voting for fascists and buying Rupert Murdoch's papers.

AU: Do you guys have any plans in place to put out a new album?

D: That's always the plan! Just need to get together and write the songs!

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The Dreadnoughts

Interview by Chuck Andrews

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you responsible for in the Dreadnoughts?

N: I'm Nick, I'm the singer, guitarist, sometimes-accordionist and I'm also responsible for the bit of the show where we throw fruit at the audience while screaming obscenities at them.

AU: How would you describe the Dreadnoughts to someone who has never heard them before?

N: It's basically just sea shanty music, with eight other random genres added in, all played with a punk backline.

Basically we are a record label's worst nightmare, promotionally speaking. Also when we play live we don't do any music, we just sound check and then talk into the mics for 90 minutes.

AU: You guys have a new album coming out June 24th on Stomp Records correct?

N: Stomp? I thought we were signed to Virgin Records? Sons of ***** in the band lied to me! I quit!

AU: How is the new album similar or different from previous Dreadnoughts albums? Anything else you would like to add about the album?

N: Yeah *Roll and Go* is actually kind of a 'throwback'

album, sort of the album we would have written in 2007 if we hadn't sucked so much at the time. God, we sucked.

AU: Does Marco still play drums in the band? If so, does he still crowd surf to the bar and back each gig while playing a drum?

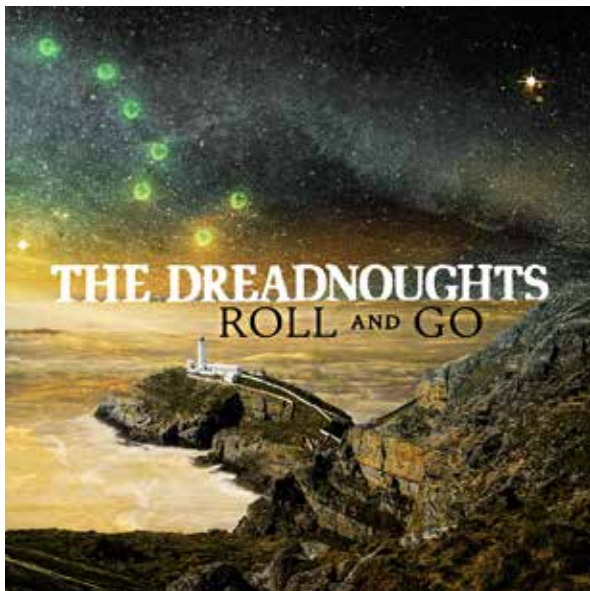
N: Regrettably yes, and yes. We only keep him in the band because he does that One Cool Trick during the shows and because he knows how to do an Excel Spreadsheet. We make this colossal amount of cash and he's the only one who can

keep track of it all properly.

AU: How many bands on Stomp Records have covered "Northwest Passage" by Stan Rogers? Is there a story behind why you chose to cover it?

N: Oh, Stan was my childhood hero! We've been singing it for years, it's obviously a masterpiece. And I think

Stomp should put out a compilation album where every single one of their bands, ska, ska-punk or otherwise, are forced to do a version of "Northwest Passage." Or you're off the label. Don't want to do one? Get fucked, you're off the label.



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ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND

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AU: What makes being on Stomp Records a unique experience?

N: We think there are like five good ska songs total, whereas most of our label-mates are like "SKA IS MY IDENTITY AND I WILL NEVER TURN MY BACK ON SKA".

AU: Where in the world does the band have the largest following?

N: Poland. We played there like 18000 times in a row once and I am permanently in love and also hideously emotionally scarred from the experience. Kurwa. In fact we just released a single about that, "Problem." Check it out!

AU: Is there anywhere that you haven't toured that you still really want to go?

N: Oh man yeah, Greece. SO want to play in Greece, and Turkey as well. We've played it pretty safe but that would be a genuinely new cultural experience for us.

AU: Are you aware this is the second time Dreadnoughts have been featured in consecutive issues of Absolute Underground.

What are you going to do to make it a hat-trick?

N: Didn't we already talk about this? The \$125 fee and the 'happy ending'? Wait, are your readers supposed to know about this?

AU: Final words of wisdom?

N: DRINK. REAL. CIDER.

AU: Where can people find the band online?

N: www.thedreadnoughts.com! Also we maintain a blog at thedreadnoughts.substack.com and have all the usual social media crap, except tiktok, because we are old and have no idea what that is.

<https://thedreadnoughts.bandcamp.com>

<https://stomprecords.com/shop/roll-and-go>

PHOTO CREDIT: Basia Karpinski





Satanic Surfers

**Interview with bassist Andy Dahlström
by Ira “Hero Of Our Time” Hunter and Jared
“Going Nowhere Fast” Amos**

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

Andy Dahlström: My name is Andy and I play bass guitar in Satanic Surfers.

AU: Where did you grow up? What was the punk scene like there?

AD: I grew up in Lund in the South of Sweden. We had this youth centre where I got in touch with older punks. One of them being Rodrigo (Alfaro) from the Satanic Surfers. He helped us get a rehearsal space there. So we could practice with my first punk band. We were maybe 14 or something.

AU: What was the name of that band?

AD: I think it was Wanker Society, very adolescent. Then I moved to Malmö, which is the biggest city in the South of Sweden. Where I still live today. We’re all from there. The punk scene there was more living and vivid. Touring bands would go there instead of Lund. It’s also very close to Copenhagen in Denmark. So we’d go there all the time for shows.

AU: When punk was first starting around the world, what was going on in Sweden?

AD: One of the first punk bands I ever heard was this Swedish band called Ebba Grön. They started in 1977. There are a few Swedish punk bands that



came before them. Like one band called Kriminella Gitarrer (Criminal Guitars). I think that’s the first. But I heard Ebba Grön first. They drew inspiration from The Clash, I think. Now when I look back at it, it’s a lot of rock and roll. But the lyrical content was like ‘Hang God’ and they were saying things against politicians and stuff. So it was very punky and it really resonated in me. So after I heard them, I really wanted to play punk. Then I heard Misfits and stuff.

AU: What is the origin story of the Satanic Surfers?

AD: Rodrigo started the band in 1989 with a bunch of other dudes. They were teenagers at the time. I think their most solid lineup came a few years after and they did their first release in ‘91 or ‘92. From there they grew really big with skate punk in the 90s.

AU: What record label did Hero Of Our Time come out on?

AD: That was on Burning Heart Records. Originally Satanic Surfers did a CD/EP that they released

themselves and then Bad Taste Records released it again as a split with a Ten Foot Pole. Then they went to Burning Heart Records and did three or four records there and then Satanic Surfers went back to Bad Taste Records.

AU: How would you describe the band’s sound?

AD: It depends on your frame of reference,

right? A lot of people when they just hear the name, they think it’s some kind of devil worship music. Which it could be, you know, it’s arbitrary. But if I have to describe it to someone, I would say it’s very fast, very aggressive and very melodic. The thing that makes Satanic Surfers stand out

from other bands is that our singer is also the drummer. That’s not too common. He plays really fast and pretty technical and he still sings very clear. So that’s a cool thing.

AU: There’s elements of humor in there too,

sometimes.

AD: Yeah, some teenage humor in the early lyrics. Whereas the new ones are more self-biographical, like more personal and a bit more political sometimes.

AU: There is the song about the guy who lost his arms and can’t surf and skate and can’t masturbate. Is that based on a real person?

AD: From what I know it’s a guy called Hank and he did lose all his limbs. So his faith was worse than Tyrannosaurus Rex.

AU: Most Satanists are in metal bands. What made you guys start a punk band with a satanic name?

AD: There has always been a fascination for old metal bands like Venom and they’re very satanic, at least in their approach. So it was easy to pick up that gimmick if you will. The music is not metal, per se, it’s more skate.

AU: Is there surfing in Sweden?

AD: Yeah, you can actually surf pretty close to where we live. None of us do

it though.

AU: Snowboarding or skateboarding?

AD: For snowboarding you want to go further North in Sweden. But skateboarding, yeah. Malmö where we live now has a really strong skateboard scene. There’s a skateboard High School. As well as a lot of ramps and half pipes.

AU: You are touring for the 27th Anniversary of your Hero Of Our Time album, can you take us through some of the songs and what they are about?

AD: I think that’s the most well known album. It came out in September ‘95. It has some political content about stuff that was going on at the time. There’s of course also the armless skater. One song is about the frustrations of being on tour. Which is a theme that has come back in other

songs as well. One song is called “Head Under Water.” It’s about being true to yourself.

AU: Any career highlights?

AD: I really enjoy it when we make new music in a rehearsal space. I think that it’s something magic that happens. Then you stand still for a while. But then when you record it and put it out, you always have to wait until people are not against the new songs, when they actually like them. Then when you play them and you get that feedback from the crowd, that’s the best. Like when the crowd sings so loud that you can’t hear yourself. That’s the best feeling.

AU: How has it been touring with No Fun At All?

AD: It’s really fun because both bands come from the 90s skate punk scene and we’re both Swedish. We’re good friends and we get each other. There’s no hierarchy bullshit. So it’s really nice.

AU: Have you guys toured through Canada before?

AD: Yeah, we used to play Snow Jam Tour and Grind Tour. We played Montebello Rockfest and ‘77 Montréal. I think Canada has been one of the strongholds for Satanic Surfers. Satanic and Canada, they’ve gone well together throughout the years.

AU: Any new music in the works?

AD: We are in the middle of recording seven new songs for an EP. We’ll release it in the fall.

AU: What was the last album that came out?

AD: It was called *Back From Hell*. It came out in 2018, that was our comeback album. Because we



quit in 2007 and then we reunited in 2015. We had lots of time to work on that one. It felt really cool.

AU: Any final words of wisdom?

AD: I think everyone should stop eating meat. (The rest of the band walks down the street and joins the interview)

AU: Do you guys want to add to this interview? Who are we talking to?

Band: Magnus, Rodrigo, and Max.

AU: What do people have in store today with the live show?

Magnus: High energy punk rock and old punks.

AU: What do you have to say to the Canadian fans out there?

Max: Thank you for letting us play for you. Thank you for being a friend.

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ABSOLUTE HORROR

Alone and Shuddering in the Dark

By Vince D'Amato

I ran a non-profit Film Society in Vancouver, Canada and London, England from 2012 until the summer of 2019, the first year of the pandemic, which seems so long ago to me now. I have very fond memories of operating and programming for the Film Society, which would screen films from high-end theatres to cinema bars just so that we could run films for the community. In 2011, when I had first been inspired to start this Canadian/UK Film Society, which would focus heavily on genre films, one of my good friends and mentors Justin Harries (of the now-defunct "Filmbar 70") asked me, "If you could only pick one film to show an audience, what would it be?" I immediately answered without hesitation: *Alone in the Dark*, and I quickly followed this up with: "The Jack Sholder one from the eighties, not the Uwe Boll one."

Justin was quick to assure me that most people in the UK wouldn't have heard of this movie. I said that they should hear of it. He asked me why.



Jack Sholder's 1982 video store staple was actually something of a standout to me back in the VHS days, solely because the alluring VHS cover art. Showing only the right leg and right hand of a man (presumably the killer) holding an axe by its handle, letting the sharpened and bloody head of the axe dangle



near his ankle as the blade reflects the glint of the far-off moon, which hovers over the dark, black woods in the background. This VHS cover always captured my attention and imagination as a kid – however, it wouldn't be until 2009 when I finally and actually watched Jack Sholder's film, when an official studio DVD was released (by Warner Brothers). And in 2009, I was actually blown away by the film; admittedly, because I went into it with really no expectations – but even without the baggage of expectations, I still wasn't expecting what I saw, which was a pretty suspenseful and intense home-invasion movie that was peppered with dream-surrealism. Both of these angles are what immediately attracted me to the film; in fact, I would



commit to the notion that *Alone in the Dark* was the gateway film for me when it came to surrealism in horror; something that has become a favorite trope of mine in an array of genre films (if you could in fact call hallucinogenic surrealism a "trope" of the horror genre). Appreciating this "trope" of dream-narrative is what made me take second and third reflection on other genre films, including Brian DePalma's *Raising Cain* and *Femme Fatale*, and what's made Dario Argento's "Director's Cut" of his 1985 *Phenomena* (aka "Creepers") an all-time favourite of mine. In a sudden act of bizarre behavior for me personally, I actually sold off my *Alone in the Dark* DVD in 2011 as part of an 880-DVD purge when I moved from Vancouver to London. It wasn't until my conversation

with Justin Harries over a couple of pints that I realized I'd made a mistake in not saving that DVD. To add insult to injury, it went out-of-print fairly quickly, and I wasn't able to find another copy until Scream Factory finally re-released this horror gem on Blu-ray during Halloween season last year (2021).

Along with Jack Sholder's gem, Scream Factory has recently released other obscure gems over the first few months of 2022, including the aforementioned *Femme Fatale* from master director Brian DePalma; Paramount Studio's 1975 courtroom-thriller/rape-revenge semi-exploitation movie *Lipstick*, which stars Margaux Hemingway and Chris Sarandon and was produced by prolific Italian producer Dino De Laurentiis; and *Child's Play* & *Fright Night* director Tom Holland's forgotten 1993 thriller *The Temp*, which starred Timothy Hutton and Lara Flynn Boyle (*Twin Peaks*). Just to circle back to *Lipstick* for a moment, this was a film that blew me away a little bit when I first saw it in the early 2000s (on DVD), when I was very involved in exploring the exploitation magic of movies like Umberto Lenzi's *Hitcher in the Dark* and the slough of mesmerizing gialli and Lucio Fulci films being released by the then-new DVD companies Anchor Bay and Shriek Show. But the thing that struck me about *Lipstick* was that it was somehow blurring the lines between a "serious" Hollywood studio movie and 1970s-style exploitation, sort of somehow competing with the early films of Wes Craven and Tobe Hooper, while also implementing a weirdly network-television tone to the courtroom-drama parts of the film. So how was one to take this strange movie, which starred actual Hollywood actors like Chris Sarandon from *Dog Day Afternoon* (and later Tom Holland's *Fright Night*) and Anne Bancroft? Taken as an unusual curio, *Lipstick* is far better that it seemingly has any right to be at face value. I'm sincerely happy that the curators at Scream Factory saw fit to obtain and re-release this (another gem) on Blu-ray this year. Being a



huge Brian De Palma fan, of course I was also ecstatic to see *Femme Fatale* on this year's roster of Blu-ray releases – but I'm also personally guilty of forgetting about Tom Holland's thriller *The Temp*, which is nothing but a fun, comic-book ride of sometimes silly but consistently suspenseful scenarios of a psychotic temporary secretary's antics (Boyle) against her temporary boss (Hutton) – and it is worth the ride, but admittedly, it's partly because already we know that director Holland also had some seminal horror films under his belt by that time; so it's better to watch *The Temp* in that context.

Going back to seminal horror films and Jack Sholder's repertoire, I'm honestly shocked to this day that he never achieved any horror-film-director cult status like his cohorts Wes Craven or



Tom Holland. The trio of horror films that he made in the 1980s surely should have been enough to cement his status as such: *Alone in the Dark* (1982), *A Nightmare on Elm Street part 2: Freddy's Revenge* (1985), and the first body-jumping horror movie ever made starring *Twin Peaks*' Kyle MacLachlan, *The Hidden* (1987). Home runs, all of them. In recent years, Sholder's *Nightmare on Elm Street* sequel has received additional attention and

accolades as being one of the first gay "coded" horror films ever produced, along with Tom Holland's *Fright Night*; and both of these films did in fact cast gay actors in leading roles as well. Very progressive for horror cinema in the 1980s, even if the subject matter was "coded" instead of being overt. But that's also part of the charm and subtle brilliance of both of those films. But Jack Sholder's first three horror outings in the world of cinema contained enough thoughtful

subject matter and subtext to fill an entire repertoire of other directors' entire bodies of cinematic works; like mental illness (*Alone in the Dark*), gay sexuality (*Freddy's Revenge*), and absolutely ground-breaking genre ideas (*The Hidden*) packed into

immensely engaging horror films that would, and did, literally influence and impact the horror genre for the decades to come, and also decades later.

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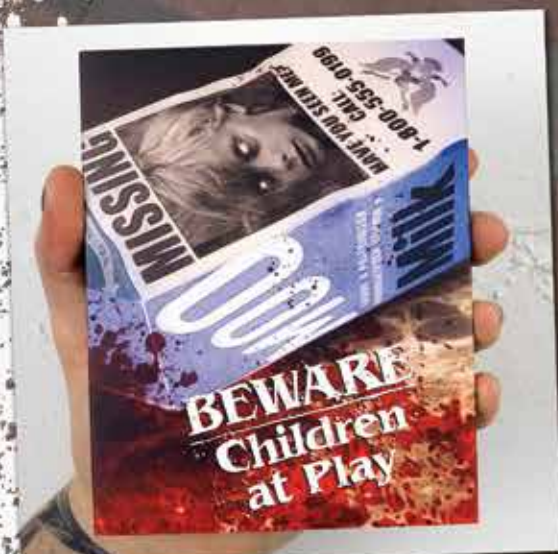
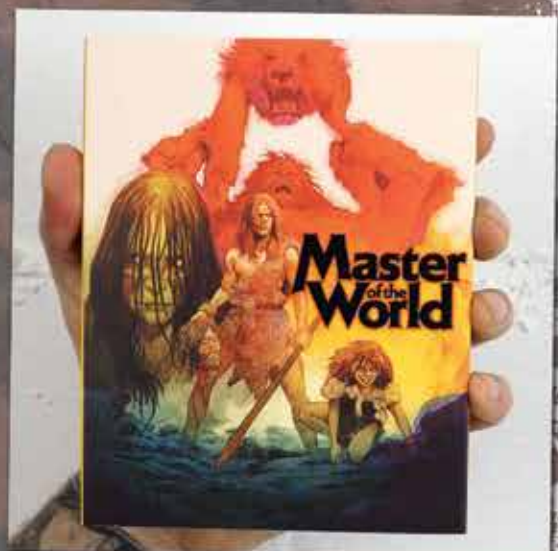
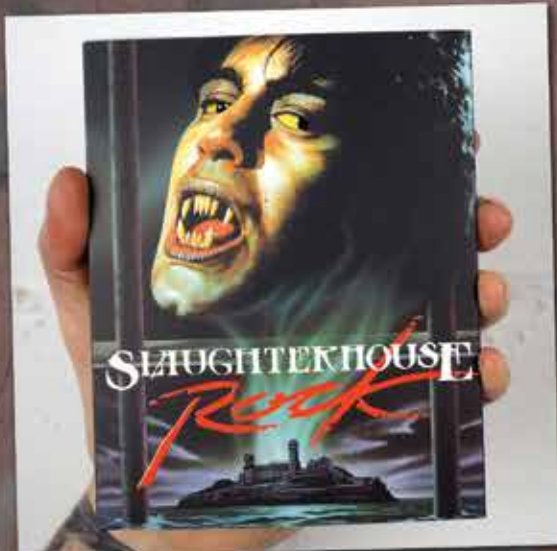
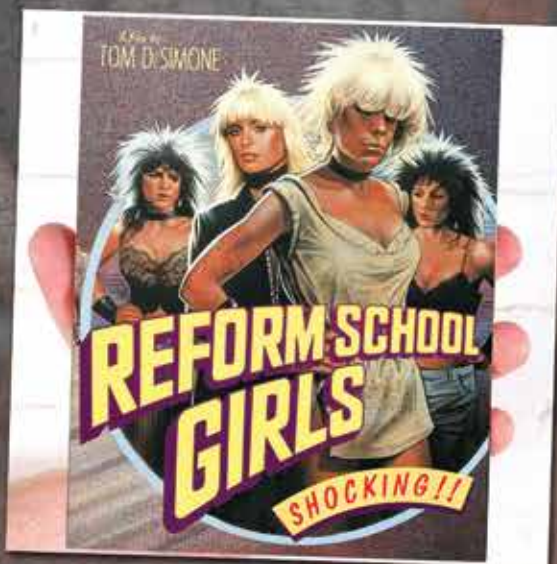
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Citizen Rage

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

MR: My name is Mark Russell, my friends call me... Mark Russell.. I would prefer it if you called me Mark Russell, I'm not known for shit but I have been around here or there. I've been hosting shows in the Calgary area for 18+ years with the best community you can imagine, I like long bike rides in the forest while listening to "New York" by Alicia Keys, sandwiches and pissing off bylaw officers while I walk my dog (eat shit wanna be pig). Oh, ya and I've had the honor of shredding vocals with my homies in Citizen Rage for almost 10 years now.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who is in the band and what are you all about?

experience, we believe in P.M.A. and the effort it takes to get there. We have Mikey Bastard on Bass, Ross the boss Ferguson guitar 1, Sean Adam guitar 2 and Chase fuckin Hamilton on the drums, and me... Mark Russell.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

MR: We play fast, anthemic in your face OG hardcore punk. Circle pits, PMA, hugs from our homies, and rage.... That's the CR sound.

AU: Have you released an album recently? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?

MR: We have our first full length coming out, *Harsh Reality* on Cursed Blessing records. We just

released our first single "For Worse or Better" with a lyric video, so go check that out on any one of our platforms, YouTube Facebook, whatever you drain your life on.

AU: Does the new album explore any particular themes or topics?

MR: This album like everything we tackle is

spawned from a burning world that no one pays attention to, nobody has time for, and everyone hates.

A world where any type of social change is met with resistance, false information is fed to us at an alarming rate, and systemic racism is more prominent then ever. And yet we like to post our entire life on social media and act like everything is just fine. That's why we chose the name *Harsh Reality*.

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

MR: From start to finish, we promise this new album will deliver. Keep your ears tuned.

AU: Tell us about any upcoming tour plans.

MR: We are just about to crush Canada with Old school hardcore punk legends Dayglo Abortions. The Dayglo's are releasing their new album, *Hate Speech*, and we are honoured to be joining them. We start in Victoria on June 13th and wrap it up in

Halifax July 3rd. The Dayglos do have more dates they are crushing afterward, as we sadly must get back to the daily grind, well not me, I get to go on vacation with my lovely wife.....eat shit, Ross!

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

MR: I feel like we got a lot out here so how about no, I don't have anything else for you. Except thanks so much for having me.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

CALGARY CARNAGE



MR: Go see live music, support underground music venues, buy local, buy from a friend, drink water and be cool to each other.

citizenragehardcore.bandcamp.com

PHOTO CREDIT: Postblocke Media



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Kill Witch

Interview by Sheldon Byer

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

R: I'm Ronnie, the vocalist and co-founder of the band.

AU: Give us a brief history of Kill Witch, who is in the band and what are you all about?

R: We have Alexi Caron (my brother) on bass, Nick Schwartz (my partner) on guitars, Erik Adams on drums, Jordan Hamilton on guitars, and myself

(Ronnie) on vocals. I've always wanted a female-fronted thrash metal band with harsh vocals only; I'm really picky and don't care much for the clean, operatic stuff. I finally gave up and said, fuck it, I'm gonna start my own band! So I learned how to scream and as soon as I got the hang of it, we started writing and getting things going! Erik is a childhood friend of Alexi's so he was the first person we asked to be on drums. Jordan is one of Nick's oldest friends from high school. We all work really well together and we're happy with what we've been accomplishing so far!

AU: What does Kill Witch do for summer fun?

R: We like having fires in the backyard and drinking after jams. Erik (our drummer) lives two

hours north in Whitecourt, so we don't hangout often, but it's always a blast when we do!

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

R: Fast, old school thrash with some crossover elements. Our lyrics are mainly about horror, demons, and the paranormal, but we hope to introduce a couple more light-hearted tracks eventually.

AU: When can we expect a full length? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?

R: You can expect the demo sometime in the next couple months! You can expect fast, face-melting thrash. No long acoustic intros or breakdowns; we get straight to the point. We've got a couple songs with a more crossover vibe in the works as well so keep your eyes out for future releases!

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

R: We're really excited for "Evil Dead," and "Evil Dies Tonight"! Both are really fast with horror lyrical themes.

AU: What are Kill Witch's biggest influences classic & modern?

R: Slayer, Razor, Toxic Holocaust, Iron Reagan, and Power Trip.

AU: How have you been surviving the Apocalypse? Any survival tips to share?

R: We've been surviving well! The band started pretty much at the beginning of the pandemic and music has been keeping us alive and going. As for survival tips: get jabbed or fuck off hahaha.

AU: Tell us about Speedhammer Records.

R: Speedhammer Records is a new underground label based in the UK and founded by our buddy Ethan Parsons. So far, the label includes Kill Witch, Mindset, Phantom, Rot, and Chumbo. Once our demo is complete, Speedhammer Records will be

releasing it on tape and distributing it around Europe.

AU: Who would win in a beach volleyball match, Ash or Henrietta?

R: Even with a stump/chainsaw for a hand, our bet is still on Ash. Henrietta got fucked pretty fast in *Evil Dead II* and is pretty useless overall haha

AU: What makes a Kill Witch show unique?

R: I'd say we're pretty high energy on stage! Hard to say after only playing one show but we love goofing off on stage and having a good time.

AU: Any cool bands you've gigged with that we don't know about?

R: We've only played one show so far, but we played with some amazing local bands! Tymo is a sick thrash band from Edmonton and I would highly recommend checking out their latest album. We also played with Rising Sun: another sick thrash band from Edmonton.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

R: We've got some new merch in the works so keep an eye out for that! We're also working on a fun surprise

project with Speedhammer Records.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

R: Thanks for checking us out! We look forward to releasing some more shit for everyone! Keep an eye out on our social media for future releases.

AU: How do people find Kill Witch online?

KW: You can find us on Instagram and Facebook, and you can listen to our music on Bandcamp and Youtube.



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Primitive Man

This year, the *Absolute Underground* showcase at the Palomino will be headlined by the 10-year veteran doom trio Primitive Man. No strangers to Calgary or the Palomino itself, the band, along with a formidable group of tour mates including Body Void and Jarhead Fertilizer will ensure the night will go down in history as one of the top 10 Sled Metal moments. We speak with frontman Ethan Lee McCarthy about his appearance at the festival and his primitive legacy.



Primitive Man 10 Years of Deathsludge

Interview by Ryan Dyer
In the history of Sled Island, metal fans have had certain acts to look forward to among the 200 booked every year at the festival.

Absolute Underground: 10 years of Primitive Man. In this span of time, are you more or less primitive than when you started?

EM: You mean musically? I think our music has in fact evolved to what may not be our final form but it definitely took a few years to refine this sound that we 100% own and crafted ourselves. The urge to stay extremely heavy but to evolve as songwriters is stronger than ever.

AU: Primitive Man is a road band through and through. Throughout your nomadic journey, you've been through Europe, Southeast Asia, New Zealand and more. Where would you still like to tour?

EM: China, Russia, the coast of Australia that we did not get to visit, South Africa, South America, Mexico (we've done shows but never a full tour), places like Greece and other areas nearby. Cuba.

AU: Culling memories from the places you've played, what was one of the most memorable?

EM: Roadburn 2022 is probably the most memorable show we have played so far but there have been a ton of ones worth reminiscing about for different reasons, good and bad.

AU: What do you end up doing when you're back at home in Denver?

EM: Working jobs, smokin bones.

AU: For this tour you have Body Void, Jarhead Fertilizer, Mortiferum and Elizabeth Colour Wheel on trek. What can people look forward to with this selection of bands?

EM: VARIETY. Musicians who are performing at a top level with extraordinary songs and a dedication to the craft that shows itself for all five acts. Nothing sterile/inauthentic about this tour package, which is more than I can say about most five band bills that tend to roll through.



AU: You have a long history of split releases. Do you have plans for another one with one of these bands?

EM: No plans, but definitely not out of the question.

AU: You are set to play Sled Island in Calgary in June, adding your name to the legacy of bands who have played the festival such as Sleep, The Melvins and Boris. Are you stoked?

EM: Unbelievably stoked to be included in the lineup this year. Been hoping for this one for a few years now.

AU: Upon your 20th anniversary, Primitive Man should no doubt be a legendary name similar to the bands I just listed. Do you think you'll still be slugging it out then?

EM: I sure do. I don't have much else that brings me the extreme highs and lows quite like this life.

AU: Any last words for your fans in Canada?

EM: Bring your hearts, minds, and your most potent weed. Can't wait to see y'all, it's been too long.

primitivemandoom.bandcamp.com

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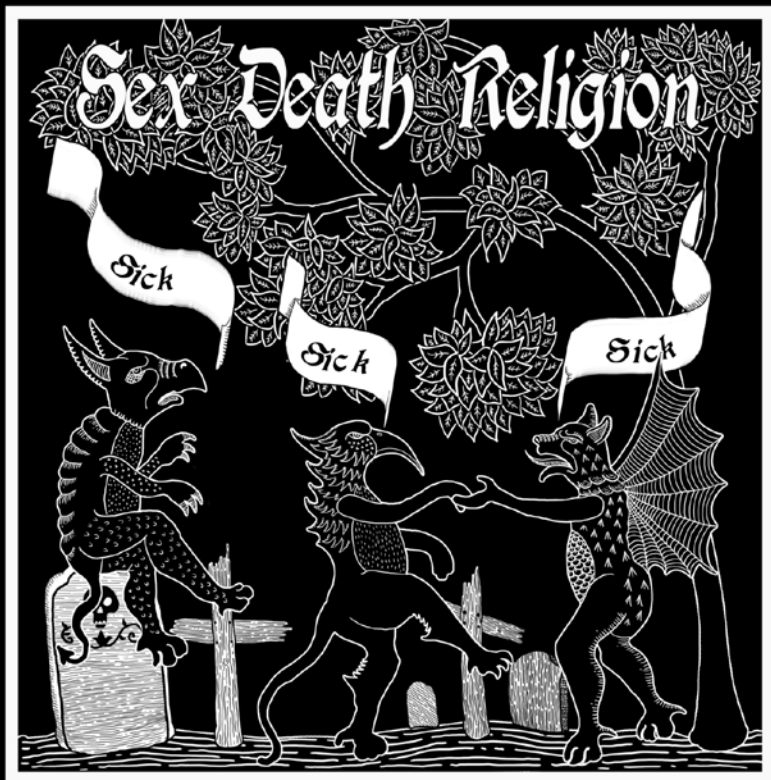
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Top Ten Early Sled Island Metal Moments (2007-2012)

By Ryan Dyer

Sled Island in 2022 is back in full force, and with this return, the festival brings feelings of nostalgia. During Sled Island's formative years, I remember reading the artist descriptions on the website, and aside from knowing the big names, would browse and think, "Hmm, which metal bands are playing this year?" This is always part of the fun, and any show held during Sled Island has the potential to be a bonafide classic or one attended by a lucky few who tell the tale as the years pass by. As I left Calgary in 2013, I cannot comment on the shows that happened between that year and 2021 (like Dead Cross), so consider this list to be highlights of the heaviest bands to appear at Sled Island during its early years.

Anvil @ The Royal Canadian Legion (2009)

Shortly after *Anvil - The Story of Anvil* caused audiences to tear up over Lips' redemption from years of obscurity, Anvil were booked for Sled Island, where interested documentary watchers and authentic Anvil fans alike congregated at the Legion for an uplifting and inspiring show which was packed to the brim. It was hard to not feel happy for the boys before, during and after this appearance.

The Melvins @ The Republik (2010)

When it was announced that The Melvins would be performing at Sled Island - and not only The Melvins, but The Melvins accompanied by Big Business, meaning two drum kits on stage, things got pretty serious and plans were made



to either catch their shows at The Republik and Olympic Plaza or live a life of regret. They brought out the big, slow, sludgy songs for this tenure - and while the Olympic Plaza show was good, it being in the middle of the day felt off (Dinosaur Jr. were the headliners). A headlining set at The Republik brought out a truly classic set.

Big Business @ The Republik (2010)

Big Business received a deal of a lifetime when they were chosen by The Melvins to not only play with them but to play with them, as in, play in The Melvins. This resulted in The Melvins having two drummers and a set-list that took from the best sludgy moments of their past. Big Business on their own are nothing to scoff at, being one of the best bass-driven stoner/sludge acts out there. Their set just before The Melvins set the tone for things to come at this classic night at The Republik.

Bison B.C. @ Various Locations (2011)

Bison played a few times over the course of Sled Island's history and every show featuring the band turns out to be a barn burner. While their set at Dickens was more sweaty, beer soaked and intimate, their set at Olympic Plaza should be remembered as it saw them playing with big time bands like The Sword, The Buzzcocks and Sleep - showing that our Canadian sludgemasters can match up with the best of them.



Sleep @ Olympic Plaza (2011)

Olympic Plaza turned into a gathering of the heshers during Sleep's performance. The sky wasn't overcast on that day - it was the pot smoke settling into the sky as Matt Pike and co let the Orange amps fester with slow riffs and feedback. Who can forget Bison B.C.'s Dan rocking out on

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the side of the stage - opening for the legends earlier and now being merely inches from the dope throne?

The Sword @ Olympic Plaza (2011)

Before Sleep took the stage at Olympic Plaza, the younger brothers of the genre - perhaps taking their first hit after getting the bong passed to them by the members of Sleep - The Sword, got the crowd right buzzed. During a day where every doom and stoner rock head in Calgary converged together to watch Bison B.C., The Buzzcocks and Sleep, Red Fang were that perfect new strain for the audience to puff on for a minute before the legends came on.

Red Fang @ The Palomino (2011)

This was a packed, sweaty, sold out show at the basement venue in The Palomino, and a vivid memory I have is getting there a little late and seeing Bison B.C.'s James Farwell also in line to get in and getting a bit annoyed as he was missing a bit of Red Fang. Once we both got in, waves of relief washed over us and we were treated to one of the best stoner rock shows Sled Island has produced.

Boris @ Various Locations (2012)

Boris played three different shows at three different venues during Sled Island and I personally made the effort to see each one - the change in venues bringing about different opening bands, a different feel and a different crowd with each performance, changing the atmosphere slightly. The Japanese doom/noise/sludge legends performed their album *Feedbacker* in its entirety for the first time in Canada during these shows, and their first at Dickens was the most memorable, as it was a secret appearance.



Russian Circles @ Dickens (2012)

The instrumental wizardry of Russian Circles was icing on the cake of a progressive metal showcase at Dickens. This show also consisted of And So I Watch You From Afar, The Weir, Indian Handcrafts and a special appearance by Boris, who stole a little bit of Russian Circles' thunder due to their appearance. Still, when thinking back on the 2012 festival, Russian Circles are one of the top bands that come to mind.

Ancients @ The Distillery (2012)

At this point in their career, Ancients were being promoted as being the next big thing from Western Canada - a band who were like Bison but a little more melodic and dynamic in their songwriting. Therefore, this show was also fairly packed - with people and quality bands, including Black Mastiff and Boris. There were a lot of great shows at each version of The Distillery, though this era will always be looked at with great fondness.



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FIRE!

Interview with Mats Gustafsson
By Don Chessa

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what are you most famous or infamous for?

MG: What? Don't you know my name? Haha! Well, I guess this is Mats Gustafsson and my habits, needs and experiences as a vinyl collector = discaholic, is competing with my name as a sax player these days. I need both to survive.

AU: How did FIRE! (Defeat) get its start?

MG: Fire! (the trio) started in a bar in Stockholm as an acoustic face-melting acoustic free jazz unit with Brötzmann and Shepp in mind. We rapidly understood the stupidity of trying to repeat

what was previously done and quickly went into our own territories. The Defeat version started basically when we were recording our latest album *Defeat*, and wanted some horn lines to be added. Our fav brass players were called in for it --- and afterwards we just said, "This HAS to be done live." So, here we are... playing and enjoying each other live.

AU: Who is in the band with you and what does it say on your Tinder Profiles?

MG: Fire! = Goran Kajfes - trumpet and Mats Åleklin - trombone. We try every day to add our profile to Tinder, but they keep throwing us out. Dunno what to do here.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

MG: That is up to the listener to decide. We cannot really describe our own shit. It is against the rules.

AU: How has the punk rock and garage scene influenced your music?

MG: For the trio: not much. For me personally - it means all. I rather go for punk and garage for inspiration than improvised shitty music. I get tired when I listen to "modern" free jazz and improvised music. So many prejudices and weird standard expectations there... And so much total mainstream going on within that genre. For inspiration I would go for the norm-setters.... for the pioneers.... Those people that were doing

the deep research back in the day, when it actually meant something. People like Shepp, Ayler, Cecil, Dixon, Brötzmann, Ornette, Don, Jeanne Lee, Derek, Lacy and some more heavy artists. Nowadays... it is mostly about copying and repeating. I am not into that shit.

AU: Have you released

an album recently? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?

MG: Fire! Released the album *Defeat*, and that is one of the reasons you are interviewing me here.

Every new album is the BEST and most creative so far.... When those facts change... we will stop our business.

AU: Does the new album explore any particular themes or topics?

MG: Life. Death. Love, Pain, Darkness. Light and all in between! More or less!

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

MG: All of them... seriously - we are freaking happy with ALL the tracks. Still in shock that I am using the flute as much as I do. Total rock n' roll!

AU: How do you prepare yourself for a show?

MG: By buying more records. I need more... and more.... To learn more. For my research. For my music. For my life. It is all different, depending on the show.... And the level of compositional materials etc. But - yeah - a record or two before the gig ain't a bad idea.

AU: You have a quieter minimalist side and have worked with vocalists. Explain how that affects your writing.

MG: It is all there. At all times. As humans, as musicians, as artists. We need soft and quiet as well as we need loud and high energy. As well as maximalistic music and minimalistic. One shall never limit the toolbox.

I love working with a vocalist, obviously... and I have been fortunate to have worked with some great voices over the years. Very inspiring. Especially since I draw a lot of inspiration from poetry these days... the connections are many. It all effects.... All.

AU: You are well known as a major collector, a self-proclaimed Discaholic. Having one massive and original collection of vinyl. Tell us about the beginnings of your collecting.

MG: When you get bitten by the bug... it is over... you cannot and should not fight that. Never leave a good vinyl behind. Richard Wayne Penniman opened up the possibilities for me at a very

early age. I just needed them all. And realized that the hunt is as valid as finding the objects. My collection is very important to me for many reasons, as information and as inspiration. It is all there! Trading records with my discaholic friends is the most fun you can have with your clothes on.

AU: What about your electronics? What influences the noisy side of Mats?

MG: My sax playing influenced me to start playing electronics and my electronics still inspires me to play the sax and the flute. As simple as that. I need them both.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

MG: My fav tone is G, and my fav color is black.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

MG: The final words are never set-in stone. Words will be presented from stage... and from the bar afterwards. If they are final, we have to find out. It is all about sharing.

AU: How do people find you online?

MG: In many different versions. There is a great fashion illustrator named Mats G. There is a great bass player making improvised music named Mats G. There is a great flute player named Mats G. There was a decent hockey player named Mats G... and some more as well If you wanna check some vinyl related issues you should look here: http://matsgus.com/discaholic_corner/

If you wanna read shit about various kind of Mats G- related... shit. You will find it here: <http://matsgus.com/>

If you wanna read shit about fire, you find it here: <http://earthwindand.com/wp/>

Everything else is up for grabs.

Thank you!

PHOTO CREDIT: Michele Giotto



Tony Iacobelli

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what are you all about?

TI: My Name is Tony Iacobelli. (Yacko-belly). I'm all about getting the most out of life while I got it.

AU: How did you get started tattooing?

TI: I started getting tattooed around age 15 in a run down old school shop. I showed up for my first appointment and some dude was getting thrown out the door head first by the owner, and the owner looked at me and asked, "You my 5:00?" The tattoo turned out

looking like shit but I walked out of that shop knowing that tattooing is what I was going to do. My life always revolved around music and drawing, and the more I hung out in shops the more I became enamoured by the whole dynamic of tattooing. I eventually landed an apprenticeship around age 23 or 24 after bugging my mentor for years.

AU: What styles of tattooing do you specialize in?

TI: I specialize in black and grey illustrative/realism

AU: What shop do you work at?

TI: Incendiary Tattoos

AU: What was the first tattoo you received and what was the first tattoo you did on someone else?

TI: My first tattoo was a Fender strat guitar, with angel wings, and a banner that says, "let the good times roll," large and on my chest at age 15. It looks just as bad, if not worse than it sounds, but I can't bring myself to cover it up. The first tattoo I did on someone else was a fish skeleton on one of my best friends back home, thank fuck for friends for being the test dummies. (Shout out to Chris

realized he wasn't laughing. Then shit just got weird. Best tattoo I ever did.

AU: Is there a certain tattoo you are dying to do on someone?

TI: I've been really wanting to do a series of demonized mafia movie characters!



AU: Any favourite types of music you like to listen to while working?

TI: Really depends on the mood that day but mainly punk rock, hardcore, reggae, old school rap, and ska.

AU: Any advice for young artists just starting out?

TI: My best advice is to make damn sure that you want this more than anything. It isn't an easy road. It's years and years of hard work and training, it's a constant hustle, but if you're dedicated and put in the grease, it is the most rewarding career you

could hope for.

AU: How do people find you online?

Facebook: Tony Iacobelli

Instagram: @tonyiacobelli_tattoos



Pike).

AU: Does your art lean towards the side of good or evil?

TI: I would say neither. My artwork definitely has a pretty dark and sinister feel to it, but I wouldn't file artwork that embraces a dark expression under "evil." That's a strong word. Drawing or painting or writing a song that looks or sounds shocking is what art is all about. I think it's the most constructive way to express emotion.

"Happy little demons," -Bob Ross

AU: What do you like most about working at Incendiary Tattoos?

TI: What I love most is that it's all one big family. We all have each others' backs no matter what. No drama, no bullshit, just straight family through and through. That's not something that is easy to come by these days.

AU: Any plans to attend any tattoo conventions this year?

TI: Yes, we try to do most of the conventions in Canada.

AU: Do tattoos always have to have a deep meaning or can it be simply about the art?

TI: People from all walks of life get tattooed for their own personal reasons, I'm not here to judge anyone on what they get or why. One thing I will say though, is that you don't have to wait for someone to die to get a tattoo. Getting a tattoo that has a lot of personal meaning is of course rad, but so is getting a spontaneous skull with a dagger in its eye. Different strokes.

AU: Absolute craziest tattoo you've ever done?

TI: A guy came in once years back, looked me dead in the eyes and asked me to draw up a man standing with his hands on his hips, and his dick in a vacuum hose...with a vacuum. It was funny up until I



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Nine Treasures

Mongolian Reincarnation

By Ryan Dyer

Inner Mongolian folk metal group Nine Treasures are indeed one of China's national treasures. Founded in 2010, they create a fusion in their songs by introducing traditional instruments such as the morin khuur, while the lyrics, utilizing throat singing, evoke nature, history and mythology. A brand new best-of, *Awakening from Dukkha*, was released last March consisting of re-recorded tracks from previous

Nine Treasures albums. Guitarist/vocalist Askhan sees the release as a re-birth of the band as he thinks ahead regarding brand new material to follow this awakening.

Absolute Underground: First, I would like to thank you for your years of music. The first time I saw you I was living in Suzhou, which is a beautiful city but not a lot goes on in terms of entertainment.



When you came to town, I didn't expect much, but it was truly one of the best concerts I had seen. So since then, I've been following Nine Treasures.

Askhan: Wow, I didn't expect you saw our concert but what a world without COVID back then right? People are missing live music so much I guess.

AU: Tell me about Inner Mongolia. I imagine your music and videos are an ideal representation of the region. In turn, how does it inspire the music?

Askhan: It's really hard to describe my hometown to you, 'cause it's always a nicer place than others to me, haha. I think everybody's hometown is better in their mind. All the influences I have are from my parents and local radio - my childhood was full of traditional songs.

AU: Do any of the members partake in archery, horseback riding or Mongolian wrestling?

Askhan: A few of us can ride horses but none of us can do archery or wrestling. My dad used to be a very good wrestler

and got a medal once at the local Naadam festival (kind of a traditional sport fest). But you know what? Our balalaika player Saina is a break dancer!

AU: It is evident by the videos of you playing at the Woodstock Festival in Poland that your music breaks any cultural or lyrical boundaries. Could you comment on this? What kind of special ingredients do you put in the songs?

Askhan: Music is a language in itself. You feel it, then you get it. Just as simple as that.

AU: What influence does Buddhism have on Nine Treasures?

Askhan: It was my grandma, she always brought me to the temple and prayed for me. I didn't know anything about Buddhism back then - I even thought those monks were dumb people who sit in the temple every day. But year after year with my grandma and I started to think about why those people keep coming into the temple until I finally searched on Google about the life of the Shakyamuni. Then it hit me really hard - I started to think about the meaning of life. It's a really the greatest question of all time, and it will lead you to the right way.

AU: The lyrics contain many Mongolian stories and legends. It may be a lot to take in for someone not schooled in the history. What do you hope people notice or take away from your music?

Askhan: I like instruments more than vocals and lyrics, because writing lyrics is really boring to me. I don't know how to write lyrics and did very little research and learning when writing them before. If I just write about stories, nothing will go wrong,



ABSOLUTE ASIA

but in the new album I'll try to write some good lyrics, more about life itself. Just like I learned about from the past few years. So maybe people will be inspired by them and their anxiety will be reduced. That's my new goal.

AU: The new best of album, *Awakening From Dukkha*, will have re-recorded songs. Why did you decide to re-record the old tracks rather than write a new album?

Askhan: The reason is the old albums are recorded very poorly because we didn't have much money to record them. But the songs aren't bad, so they deserve a quality production. Also, this album is like a reset button for us. We deleted those old albums from the internet, wanting to start fresh like Pantera did in the '90s after their '80s albums. Though fans can download them in a special zip file we put on our Facebook if they really want to.

AU: How did you approach re-doing the songs? Were there any substantial changes?

Askhan: Because we didn't have enough money for a great studio in the past, we decided to spend all of our income to upgrade our gear and it worked! It gives the record a significant quality improvement, and we were really happy with the result. You can see it in the first single, "Three Year Old Warrior." The song writing stays the same but we added tons of details on all of the songs.

AU: You have toured Europe, but after COVID, could American fans be seeing Nine Treasures?

Askhan: After the release of our album and COVID is done with for good we will tour the whole world for sure.

AU: Anything else you'd like to add? Thank you very much!

Askhan: I give my best wishes to all the people around the world to be healthy and strong.

@ninetreasures

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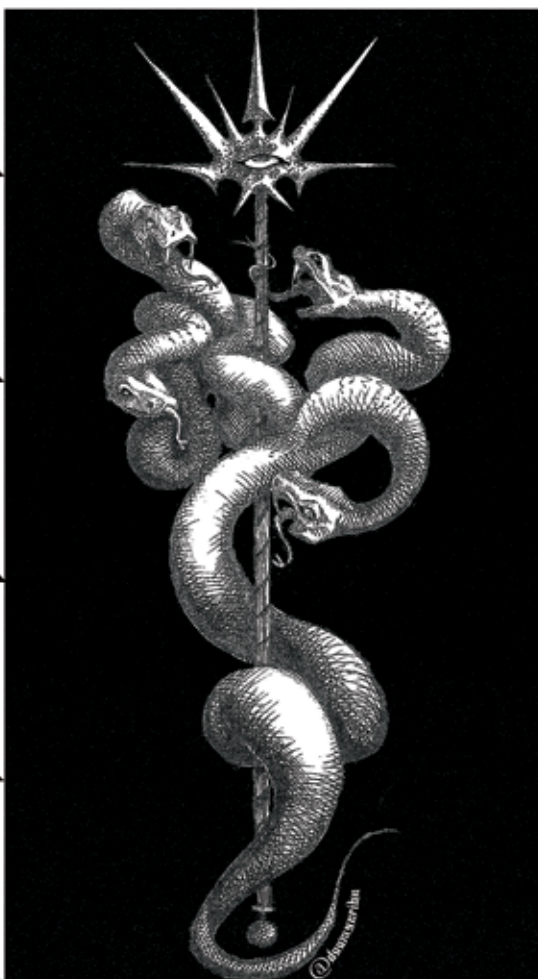
15th

CHAOS CENTURY
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Thrash Metal Night - \$12

22nd

VESSEL Zack Brannon
+ GUEST
Progressive Metal Night - \$12

29th



JULY 2022

Metal Trivia w/Prizes
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6th

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13th

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Jack Sholder Hidden Nightmares Part 1

Interview with the director of *The Hidden*, *A Nightmare On Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge*, and *Alone In The Dark*.

By Ira "Horrorshow" Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are best known for?

Jack Sholder: I'm known as a film director. When people ask me what movies I've done, the one that they're most likely to know about is *Elm Street 2*. The one that I'm the proudest of would be *The Hidden*. I've done 16 feature length films, which includes some films for television, and some episodic work as well. I've worked for most of the major studios at one time or another.

AU: How did you first get involved working in filmmaking? How did you break into the industry?

JS: I was an English major at university. Then I sort of decided that film would be an interesting thing to do. I started making some films on my own. This was in the late 60s and universities didn't have film programs at that point. So basically I got these catalogs from rental companies and figured out what I thought I needed. Then I ordered it, they sent it out and we tried to figure out how to do it. I made four movies like that in college.

When I graduated, I moved to New York and started to get some work as a film editor. Basically that was my day gig while I was under the illusion that one day I would get to be a director. It took about 12 years but finally I got the break to direct a feature film. The first one was called *Alone in the Dark* for New Line Cinema, which I had kind of a long association with. The next film they did was *A Nightmare On Elm Street*, which made a lot of money and they wanted to do a sequel. Wes Craven was supposed to direct it, but he bailed about six weeks before they were going to start shooting, because he never really liked the script. I guess he figured he had better things to do. So they needed someone to take over the film and I was pretty familiar with it because I had read early drafts of it. I was very good friends with the guy who owned the company and he would ask me for my opinions on things. I was really familiar with the project so they hired me to do it. Then that film came out and made a lot of money and the next thing I knew, I was in Hollywood.

AU: *Alone in the Dark* is sort of inspired by what was popular at the time with films like *Friday the 13th* and *Halloween*. What made *Alone in*

the Dark unique, in your opinion?

JS: Well, what made it unique was I really had very little interest in horror films and New Line was primarily a film distribution company at that point. They realized that if they really wanted to succeed, they were going to need to move into production. I remember going out with with the head of the company, Bob Shaye, to see *Friday the 13th* and he was really impressed. It was a pretty effective movie that made a lot of money and it cost almost nothing to make. So they thought if we can make a low budget horror movie, we can we can make a lot of money.

They specialized in distributing films to colleges, so they felt that they understood the "youth market".

We were sitting around and one of the execs said, "We should do this." So I came up with this idea for *Alone in the Dark*, which was sort of loosely based on the New York City blackout of 1977. The entire island of Manhattan went completely dark for at least 24 hours and people started

looting. It just seemed like society had completely broken down. I thought that was an interesting idea. So I got this idea of a bunch of homicidal maniacs in a mental institution with a very sort of new agey asylum director who feels that basically the world is crazy and that the people who are called crazy have simply adapted

to an insane world. He doesn't want any bars on the windows or stuff like that. There was actually a well known guy in Scotland who actually did that. It seemed a little wacky to me and it seemed like a good premise. So I kind of put the two together. There's a blackout and there's this asylum for the criminally insane. It's all electronic security so when the blackout happens all the doors open and they walked out and create some mayhem. But they basically fit right in because it turns out that the guy who runs the place is right. The world is kind of crazy. So it's kind of social commentary, in a way. I mean basically what I managed to do was to make an art film, if you will, in the guise of a horror film. At first I wrote the script and then they were unable to raise the financing. So I then went off and I edited a horror film called *The Burning*. Which was my real introduction to horror film work. Coincidentally that was the first film that Harvey Weinstein produced. A very original story. There's a summer camp and there's a maniac out of the woods who's killing the campers. So there you go. But I kind of learned how to build suspense and how these things work. I went back and actually did a rewrite on the script for *Alone in the Dark* and added some stuff to try to make it scarier and then it got made.

AU: Who was the female fronted punk band playing in the movie?

JS: Oh, The Sic F*cks. I had written a punk band in there because I thought that would kind of fit in with the whole craziness theme. I actually wrote in the script that there was a punk band called Nikki Nothing and the Hives. The casting director one day said "Listen there's this group that's out there that you might want to consider for the band. They're called The Sic Fucks." I said "Well okay, that sounds pretty good." So they came in and the women singers were

dressed like trashy nuns with torn black net hose and stuff like that. I thought well they are perfect I might as well call them The Sic Fucks. So that was fun.

AU: How was it working with "Howling Mad"

Murdock from the *A-Team*, actor Dwight Schultz? Was he one of the crazy guys?

JS: No, he actually played a new psychiatrist. The sort of inciting incident is that the four guys in the locked criminal ward had this psychiatrist that they worked with that they really liked and he left and this new guy came in and they are convinced that the way the new guy got the job was by murdering the former guy. The new guy is Dwight. He plays this straight arrow young idealistic psychiatrist with a family. When the lights go out these guys decide to find his house and attempt to kill everyone. I had seen Dwight when he was in a David Mamet play in New York, he's a terrific actor. The film also had Donald

Pleasence, Jack Palance and Martin Landau. So I had a pretty amazing cast for my first movie.

AU: Donald Pleasence does a vicious samurai sword downward crotch chop in the movie. How were you treated by the ratings board upon its release in 1982?

JS: We had to make some adjustments. The main one that I remember is one of the guys is this very large man who politically incorrectly these days was called Fatty. The film has a very peculiar sense of humor, which is pretty much my sense of humor. So to be a little ironic, he ends up getting killed by their 13 year old daughter.

AU: When you were given the opportunity to direct *A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge*, what was your approach to it? Did you talk to Wes Craven or were you on your own?

JS: No, I never talked to Wes. I mean, Wes basically bailed on the film. I knew Wes, I wouldn't say we were close friends but I certainly knew him and he knew me. At that point, it was not a cherished classic the way it is now. It was basically a horror film that made a lot of money. New Line wanted to have another movie come out called *A Nightmare on Elm Street 2* that they could sell and say, well it's a sequel to the first one and try



to squeeze a little more money out of it. At that point sequels were never as good as the originals. Nobody expected them to be. It's not like now where you expect the sequel is going to be bigger and better than original. So the expectations were fairly low and it was a different script.

Part of the reason that Wes didn't like the script was that Freddy actually comes out while everybody's awake. Which he felt sort of betrayed the whole concept that he had. Of course, New Line really didn't care about that. The only thing they told me was to keep it scary. They wanted me to keep Freddy dark. They had never liked the makeup on Freddy in the original so we

hired a really talented makeup artist by the name of Kevin Yagher, who went on to have a very big career. He basically redesigned Freddy's makeup and he continued to do Freddy's makeup for the next six movies. So that was all they had said, just keep it scary, get it done and do it reasonably within budget. I managed to accomplish those things

and then the movie opened up and it did very well. Like I said, the next thing I knew I was in L.A. and continued to make movies for the next bunch of years. It was kind of a lucky break. If it hadn't been for *Elm Street* I might have made another movie or I might not have. I don't know. But it certainly put me on the map. The next movie that I did, which was *The Hidden*, was extremely well received in Hollywood. So that gave me a kind of a bonafide deal.

facebook.com/jack.sholder

To Be Continued Next Issue...



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Lost Nebula

This is Mayo from The Invisible Orange opening a new space here in *Absolute Underground*. Ira, thank you so much for the space. *Absolute Underground* has been an absolute supporter of extreme music and the independent arts in general, and we at The Invisible Orange are happy to have been working with them for many years to enable our communities' artists to express themselves.

It has been exciting times for live music this spring, and things point out that this will continue through the summer. We at The Invisible Orange have all kinds of events coming up, from Death Metal (Origin, Truent), to psych rock (Blackwater Holylight), hardcore punk (Dayglo Abortions), post-punk (Korine, The Foreign Resort, Clan Of Xymox), hard industrial (Hocico), stoner doom (Telekinetic Yeti) and many others to announce in the next couple weeks in black metal, power metal, hard rock, etc. What an eclectic year this is turning out to be and we love it!

In July and August, we are organizing a whole cross-Canada tour for the independent prog metal band from Mexico, Lost Nebula. They are no strangers to many Canadian cities as this is the third time they have come to tour our country. I sat down with Harry Gonzalez and had a short and sweet chat.

Absolute Underground: Who are you? How are you? Where are you?

HG: I'm Harry Gonzalez, bass player from Lost Nebula. I'm fine, thank you! Right now, I'm at home in Sonora, Mexico with my bandmates.

AU: Lost Nebula will tour Canada for the third time in four years. Why Canada?

HG: The first time we had the opportunity to tour Canada, we fell in love with the country and really feel like going back and continuing to visit the country. Since that first time we felt like home.

AU: What is your favourite part of playing in Canada?

HG: What we like the most is the people. The peoples' reactions are amazing. We feel we

have made many friends since that first time and feel an incredible connection with the fans and the other local bands we met. Apart from that, we like the cities and are mesmerized by the nature showcase the country has, which is something amazing for us.

AU: What do you bring different or new in this tour?

HG: We are promoting our newest material, to be released this June. It is called "Created In The Image Of God" which is a four-track mini-album or EP. We have been pushing the material ahead of the tour with a couple official videos. We also prepared a special show for the people of Canada which we feel is a step up from what we have presented in the previous years. We had quite some time, over a year, to prepare for this!

AU: What else can you say about this new album / new material?

HG: This is by far some of our favourite work that we have come up with. It is a conceptual album which describes many of the social situations that humanity is facing these days, addressing themes of discrimination and acceptance. The main message is that: whoever you are in the different classification schemes, in the end, we are all humans after all.

AU: Any final words?

HG: Thank you so much everyone for receiving us back in your country. We look forward to seeing you in the upcoming days. Reconnect with old friends and make many new ones! Oh and you can expect the best show we can give you and we know you will enjoy it!

Lost Nebula will play across Canada from July 19 starting in Montreal, QC and ending on August 6 in Nanaimo, BC.

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"PLAYING LIKE THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE HERE"

Toronto's Cursed Blessings Records artists are hitting stages all over North America this summer!

Immediately upon the release of their self-titled punk rock thrasherpiece on vinyl and digitally, Toronto punks Maldita embarked on a tour of Eastern Canada hitting the stage as a headliner as well as direct support for Canadian punk legends Propagandhi



on two dates along with labelmates Mvll Crimes. Speaking of London's finest (Don't Be A Cop!), Mvll Crimes are gearing up for the release of their debut 12" vinyl for Cursed Blessings, "You Embarrass Me," so keep an eye out for it in the summer.

Fresh off their incredible show with punk rock super icons The Circle Jerks, Toronto's Dragged In will join Citizen Rage (Calgary punkers, excellent band!) and the legendary Dayglo Abortions at Toronto's Hard Luck Bar in June. This band just keeps decimating every bill they are on! Dragged In's first full length album, *LPI* (also the first release on Cursed Blessings) is still available to order for the label's

webstore but very limited copies remain.

Victoria BC skate punkers Fully Crazy are raging up and down the west coast of the USA and Canada, starting in June in Seattle followed by a trip to California for a few shows in July and ending up in Washington and their home province in August/September. This band is not one to miss, especially their debut album, *Off the Hook*, available from Cursed Blessings Records. Speaking of beautiful BC, punker trio Modern Terror have released their debut EP, "Going Viral," on vinyl and digitally and they have some really wicked show announcements coming soon! Stay tuned to the band and label's socials for info and tour dates.

Siksika Alberta punk rockers No More Moments have been tearing up highways across Canada in support of their Cursed Blessings debut, *Quarter Life Crisis*. With a new guitarist in the fold (welcome Oscar!) these guys have hit every stage from massive outdoor festivals to multiple dates with Propagandhi, No More Moments are true road warriors, do yourself a favor and see them as soon as you can!

Toronto thrash metal pioneers Sacrifice recently celebrated the Cursed Blessings release, *Live in 85* as part of their long awaited (and absolutely INCREDIBLE) return to the stage at Vancouver's splendid Rickshaw Theatre (amazing venue and staff!) The roof will be fixed soon at the Rickshaw, but while that happens you may be interested to know Cursed Blessings Records will be releasing an LP Single of Sacrifice "World War V", on 12" vinyl with 2 live bonus tracks from a show in Japan on Side B. Sacrifice "Live in 85" is 90% sold out, so don't miss your chance to own a piece of Canadian thrash metal history. Hit the label's website for that one.

Add to all this that Toronto Hardcore beauties Choices Made and The Slime are both



aggressively touring their respective records for Cursed Blessings, playing shows from Toronto to Peterborough to secret locations, "ask a punk" venues and everywhere in between this summer. These bands are the hardest working bands in Ontario, you definitely do not want to miss either when they destroy your town or city.

If Cursed Blessings aim was to sign bands who "play like they're supposed to be here" (as the



label's mantra states), they have succeeded.

Don't miss your chance to catch any of the label's roster by following them @ cursedblessingsrecords or on their website (do people still go to websites?)

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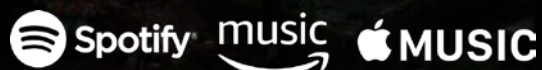
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Hooks & Bones

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous or infamous for?

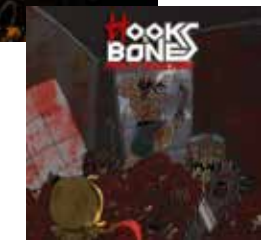
Arno: We are Hooks & Bones, hardcore punk crossover (with a hint of something else) band, from Rouen, Normandy. I am Arno, the lead singer. Nice to meet you!

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who is in the band and what are you all about?

A: We grew up in the countryside, with small towns and villages. It's a very small scene for metal, hardcore, punk... any underground style, so lots of ideas are flowering and dying, ha. In 2017 we decided to start this new band, as close friends growing old. JB (bass), Guillaume (drums) and Amaury (guitar) formed a band called Inside The Tourbus, and played for over 10 years together. As the singer decided to stop they moved to another project soon after, with me on the microphone, for this idea of making music together again came up from time to time. Eager to make music out of all the influences who inspired us all these years, and see what happens...

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

A: We could say our influences are mainly rooted in hardcore punk and metal. We like short energetic songs, with back vocals, and mosh parts but also guitar leads and blast beats. So we like to add a few drops of grindcore in it... We love the melodies of Oi! music and street punk... so we like to top ALL OF IT with a slice of sing alongs. And just like that you have the guidelines of what we listened to our entire lives (on the "rock" side). We love Sick of It All, Kickback, Madball, Agnostic Front, Slayer, AC/DC, Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, Motörhead, Cock Sparrer, The Casualties, Rancid, Napalm Death, Lock Up, Nasum, Power Trip, Nails, Misery Index... It's



countless!

AU: Have you released an album recently? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?

A: We released *Time of Reckoning* on February the 11th 2022. Eight tracks that we really tried to make the meanest possible, hah.

The results and feedbacks are pretty cool so far, so it's encouraging. We wanted to do our best on this record so we chose to work with Guillaume Doussaud at Swan Sound Studio who recorded and mixed it brilliantly! We couldn't hope for a better result, as soon as we heard the dry recordings at the end of each day, we knew it was a good call! It was mastered by Dan Randall at Mammoth Sound Mastering, once again we were stoked he accepted to work on our project. He worked with lots of bands we love (Vio-lence, Iron

Reagan, Vitamin X...) and really

got involved in this from the start (literally, first email!). Expect a straightforward Hardcore Punk record from A to Z. ;)

AU: Does the new album explore any particular themes or topics?

A: I'd say *Time of Reckoning* is basically the theme, if it has to be a theme. The lyrics are mostly written based on observations and experiences, sometimes it's just a topic I wanna talk about so I make an extrapolation of this topic. But each song on this record is a "time to set this straight" situation... Even "What's my name?!" was inspired by the Ali vs. Terrell fight which was a masterclass of respect, pride and cruelty from The Greatest. In France we say, "Put back the church on town square."

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

A: I like the way we open this record. It's what we do, in your face from first to last second, but on a different beat we're used to. I love this Kickback cover we recorded cause I love the original song... I have to admit I listened to it a lot. I'm stoked we did a Kickback cover!

AU: What do you like best about working with Wrecking Crew Records?

A: John, the boss, gave us a very cool, human, DIY-ish contact. We love that! There are plenty of great bands on the label, they are very supportive... What else! (Cheers Blame It On The Dog?, Motivo, Las Calles, Good Old Boyz...)

AU: How have you been surviving the Apocalypse? Any survival tips to share?

A: Lockdown, if you don't play music: food, water, a computer (or PlayStation...) + Civilization 6 (or 7 if you read this after 2023), consequent stock of movies, books and a cool understanding girlfriend could help you...

AU: Any shows or tours planned to promote new release?

WRECKING CREW RECORDS

A: Absolutely. We go on weekend tours as we obviously don't live out of music and video games... So our booker in France, Poivron Booking, planned several shows with Punk band from Paris Union Jack in February. We have plenty of shows to be confirmed, underground shows are just back on the map. We'll be on the road in France this summer.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

A: Ok. You should know Amaury, our guitarist, is a killer classic guitarist and likes Dungeon Synth music genre. JB, bass, is a triathlon runner. Guillaume, on drums, practices krav-maga. I have a cat and a rabbit as pets, and they are friends AF!

We have our music video out already. It was launched on January 25th on Hardcore Worldwide (HCWW) YouTube Channel. After 6 days we almost hit 5K views, it was AMAZING to us! and YouTube shut it down, inspecting for some "violence, sexual and disturbing content." So bummed about it... BUT we uploaded it on a different platform, and by the time you are reading this, we'll try to upload it back on OUR YouTube channel... maybe you will be able to see it someday, at your own risk. Stay alert.

Something you should know: the director wants to remain anonymus cause he's a KILLER director here in France! We have an other single out of *Time of Reckoning* to come out in video soon.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

A: Thanks for reading this neverending interview, I swear I'll try to make it shorter next time.

Stay safe, listen to music, read *Absolute Underground*, have fun and check out *Time Of Reckoning*!

CHEERS! HOOKS!

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Decimate Metalfest

Interview with organizer Sloan Voxx

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what do you do?

SV: My name is Sloan Voxx and I am the owner and head promoter at Decimate Metalfest. I'm also a single mama and Operations Manager by day and am the singer for Calgary local metal band, SYRYN.

AU: What motivated you to host a metal fest in Alberta?

SV: Various components lead to my decision to begin the journey of hosting a festival. I started out promoting here and there within Calgary, driven by a long-time friend of mine who said I'd be great at putting on shows. Now, I don't know if I'd say I'm great at it, but I most definitely hold a place dear in my heart for music, and as a musician myself, always have. At one point in



2016, I was approached by an online radio station that wanted to put on a festival and asked for my assistance as a promoter. After working with his team, I was inspired to run a festival on my own! Next came the colossally important factor... as I was trying to decide if my own festival was the right thing to do, I took time to attend other local festivals and meet with their promoters, interact with bands, and network. Well, it will likely come as no surprise to any of you that I fell head over heels in love with Loud as Hell Festival (Drumheller, Alberta). The amount of heart that Geoff Bourrie ingrains into his festival can literally be felt when you are there - in absolutely every single aspect. We quickly found that we have very similar fundamentals, and visions, and immediately became friends. Getting to know him and becoming the Volunteer Coordinator at his festival helped me to learn about everything from various perspectives and confirmed within me with no shadow of a doubt that a festival was something I wanted to do. There's just something about bringing people together under a metaphorical umbrella triggered by a united love for music that make my heart truly happy. I'm so glad Decimate has been and continues to be an event people mark in their calendars and look forward to attending!

AU: What can ya tell us about this year's third edition of Decimate Metal Fest?

SV: This year's edition of DMF is quite a bit heavier than it has been in years past, and we are absolutely living for it! With that said, we have still managed to keep it versatile. I really enjoy working with youth bands and newer bands

and try to incorporate them into our lineups as much as possible. We've got various acts and genres from solo artists to youth music schools to newer bands, to rock bands, to more well-known bands, with burlesque, and much more! While we know "Metalfest" is in our title, we are open to working with all genres of music and like to be as diversified as we can be! Oh - there will also be an Air Guitar Contest!! You'll

definitely want to check that one out!

This year's festival and fundraiser will be held at The High River Brewing Company. We are very excited to be able to offer an All-Ages event again this year, and for it to be Open Air! This year's fundraiser will be held on June 4th consisting of SYRYN (Calgary, AB), Metavore (Calgary, AB), Before I Fall (Alberta), Drearius (Lethbridge, AB), Spit of the Sin (Calgary, AB), and Hazzardous Material Burlesque (Alberta)!

Ticket Link: <https://www.decimatemetalfest.com/online-store>

The first evening (Friday, June 24th) will consist of: Planet Eater (Regina, SK), Quietus (Edmonton, AB), No More Moments (Siksika Nation, AB), Luminosity (Calgary, AB), and Lethal Mentality (Youth Band - High River, AB). The second evening (Saturday, June 25th) will consist of Arrival of Autumn (Grande Prairie, AB), Snakepit (Calgary, AB), Skepsis (Edmonton, AB), Storm The Empire (Kelowna, BC), Caveat (Calgary, AB), Volt (Fort McMurray, AB), Infrastrctvre (Calgary, AB), Hazzardous Materials (Burlesque/Dance - Alberta), Mixed Blame (Youth Band - High River, AB), Lÿnx (Calgary, AB), WACK (Previously known as Downpour - Calgary, AB), Lightning Ant Music School (Youth Band - Calgary, AB), Craig Carswell (Solo Artist - High River, AB), Vicarious Vandalism (Youth Solo Artist - Okotoks, AB)

Okotoks, AB)

Ticket Link: <https://www.decimatemetalfest.com/online-store>

Any attendees coming to us from Sled Island or Calgary Horror Con showing proof of purchase to either event will receive \$5 off at the door on Saturday, June 25th. Camping will be available for the main event (June 24/25) only. It will be located on an acreage within 10 minutes of the venue. Taxi service is also available locally and is very reasonably priced! Please email decimatecamping@gmail.com for any reservations or inquiries.

AU: How did you choose this year's band for the lineup?

SV: This year's lineup comprises bands who were set to play Decimate in 2020 (which, of course, we had to cancel due to Covid), and new bands who submitted when we opened up submissions in late 2021, as well as reaching out to some crowd favorites! We wanted to ensure we included an all-ages component, as we plan to do annually moving forward. Out youth are our future, and we want to encourage as much music support for them musically as we can! This is also one of the reasons we have partnered with RedBlack Recording, a High River Recording Studio who gears towards recording youth musicians. They offer discounts for youth recording and are fantastic at what they do!

AU: What advice do you have for bands who want to apply to play on DMF in future years?

SV: The submission review process is a long, and tedious one. We get hundreds of submissions

from quite literally all over the world. The advice I would have is to stand out! Some bands have taken the route of a unique submission video, of story writing, of poetry, and lots of other fun and unique ways of setting themselves apart. Also, please ensure you are meeting deadline guidelines as well as ensuring your submissions are being sent via the appropriate avenue, which is laid out within the submission announcements.

Another tip would be to attend the event, and introduce your band to myself and my team, networking is always one of the best ways to get noticed, and we truly appreciate anyone who goes the extra mile!

AU: How has it been changing from in-door to open-air?

SV: We were lucky enough to be able to put on a mini-fest last year, which was also held at the High River Brewery. The Management and team at this venue made the switch an absolute breeze! (Their beer is also AMAZE!) We do of course have to consider the weather, and everyone's safety with an Open-Air event, so rest assured that there will be shaded areas and provisions will be made to ensure the safety of our attendees should the heat be a factor come the time of the event.

AU: Where do you see Decimate Metal fest in the next 5 years? Will High River, AB be its permanent home?

SV: We would like to see the festival grow and reach the masses. We would love to bring in some larger names and incorporate some fun activities, perhaps a community market where locals can vend and promote their businesses.

While Decimate may not be held in High River permanently, we plan to continue working with them in the future for both fests. Mini-fests, and fundraisers. We are hoping to be able to hold Decimate at the initially intended Millet Agriplex in Millet, Alberta in 2023 or 2024.


AU: Anything else you like to add for festival-goers?

SV: THANK YOU!! None of the events we put on would be possible without your support and

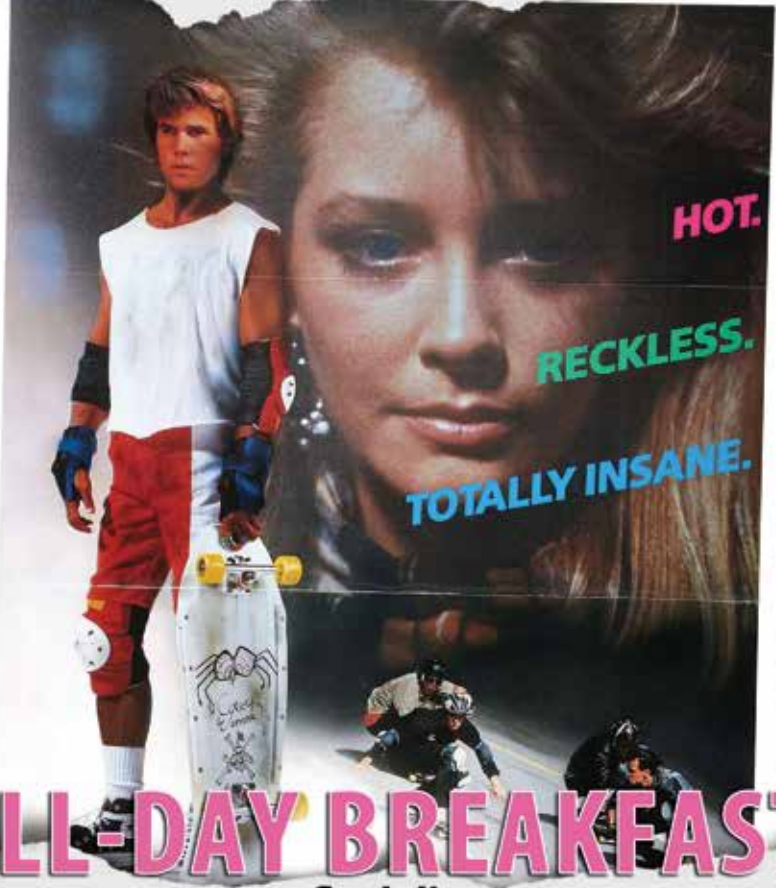


attendance. You are the cornerstone of the music industry, and we appreciate you so much for your continual attendance. If we could make one small request, it would be to please invite others to these events. Bands have been known to turn self-proclaimed non-metal lovers into metal-lovers through their exciting performances, and we definitely don't want anyone left out! So, please share local events, invite anyone you think may enjoy it, and please continue to attend!

[decimatemetalfest.com](https://www.decimatemetalfest.com)



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Calgary Horror Con

Interview with founder Dan Doherty
by Ira "Horrorshow" Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most notorious for?

DD: Hi everybody! It's Dan from the Calgary Horror Con!

AU: Give us a brief history of Calgary Horror Con. What was your original inspiration?

DD: I was a horror fan since I was about 7 years old. I lived in a small settlement off the Miramichi river in New Brunswick. In school, I was bullied bad because of my Autism, Aspergers specifically (communications deficit without an intellectual deficit) and partly because my parents both taught at the same school that I went to. Horror was my escape and allowed me to test my bravery from a safe distance. It worked in that I worked a lot of security as a young adult as well as was in the Canadian Armed forces primary reserve as an infantry soldier for 6 years. I always loved and cheered for the monsters, although there was a couple victims I wanted to win that didn't Pam from *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* was one. I started the Calgary Horror Con because I wanted to create a show for me to go to because there wasn't such a thing in Canada, the trick was how to get everyone else to pay for my show. I think it would be far cheaper and I would enjoy it more if I just went to someone else's convention because it is a lot of work, trust me it is a rush in the end but it takes a lot to get there



Clarion from 11-7

AU: Who are some of the guests for your upcoming 2022 Horror Con?

DD: Billy Zane (*Tales from the Crypt Demon Knight, The Phantom, Titanic*), Richard Brake (*31, 3 From Hell, Doom, Bingo Hell*), Shawnee Smith (*Amanda - SAW, The Blob*), James Jude Courtney (*Micheal Myers - Halloween 2018, Halloween Kills and Halloween Ends*), Andrew Divoff (*Wishmaster, Lost*), Quinn Lord (*Sam - Trick R Treat, The Man in High Castle*), Amelia Kinkade (*Night of the Demons I, II, III*), Jeff Daniel Phillips (*31, 3 From Hell, Satanic Panic*), Lisa Zane (*Freddy's Dead the Final Nightmare and The Nurse*), and the champions of Horror Joe Bob Briggs and Darcy the Mail Girl from "The Last Drive-in" on Shudder.

AU: Do you have anything special planned this year to celebrate Horror Con surviving a

global pandemic?

DD: It is our 10th Anniversary two years late, we extended our film submissions taking in over 1700 films, bought more props and are coming back bigger and stronger than the last show. It has been a bigger challenge than Covid because we had two team members that died over the break, losing our Celebrity Assistant Coordinator Anthony Asselin and our Art Director, the guy responsible for all the decorations for the show; award winning home hunter Jason Oliver. Losing people that were like family to you and played such important roles, it was a big hit to the team and community. The best way I can honour my friends is to put on the best damn show I can.

AU: What horror guests have appeared in previous years?

DD: I have booked over a 100 celebrities since starting the Calgary Horror Con, Linda Blair (*Regan-Exorcist*), John Kassir (*Cryptkeeper- Tales from the Crypt*), most of the Jasons from *Friday the 13th* (Ari Lehman, Richard Brooker, CJ Graham, Kane Hodder, Ken Kirzinger, Derek Mears), a lot of the Micheals from *Halloween* and a bunch of Leatherfaces from *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and one of my favorites sfx legend Tom Savini.

AU: When and where is this year's event taking place?

DD: Sharpen your machetes and fire up your chainsaws and meet us at the Clarion Hotel in Calgary for a VIP party on June 24th at 9pm and the Convention runs June 25th and 26th at the

AU: Describe the Calgary Horror Con experience for people who have yet to attend.

DD: The Calgary Horror Con is a non-profit organization that was built by a bunch of Horror fans, we are a community and it is run locally. We are a more intimate show not pushing people through lines to meet their favourite celebrities, it is a different experience, you get time with guests. We are in a hotel, with a bar and carpet on the floors, your local bank doesn't have a booth nor does your local ISP. We are a community of local artisans and retailers catering our products to Horror Fans. You're not here to change cell providers. Everything is geared towards Horror Fans, so if you don't love Horror, you're at the wrong show.

AU: What are the plans for future events and the long term growth of Horror Con?

DD: We are waiting for the right opportunity to move into other cities, and we also outgrew our space but the move will be a tough one. Doubling Vendor space means having the attendees to support it. We have the highest retention rate of vendors; we continue to grow while other shows shrink because we are concerned for everyone's return on investment. Growth isn't as important as continuing to keep doing what we love with the community that got us where we are from Attendees, Volunteers and Vendors.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already?

DD: From a black sheep and an outsider growing up, I am all about building community, and inclusion. I had many great causes approach me but the Calgary Horror Con will always be about promoting the Horror Genre. There is enough



division in the world, and sometimes real life is more horrific than fiction. This is an entertainment convention, the break from reality, I choose to stay on brand and promote the Horror Genre, and it won't change.

AU: Anything else to promote? -Any final words for our readers?

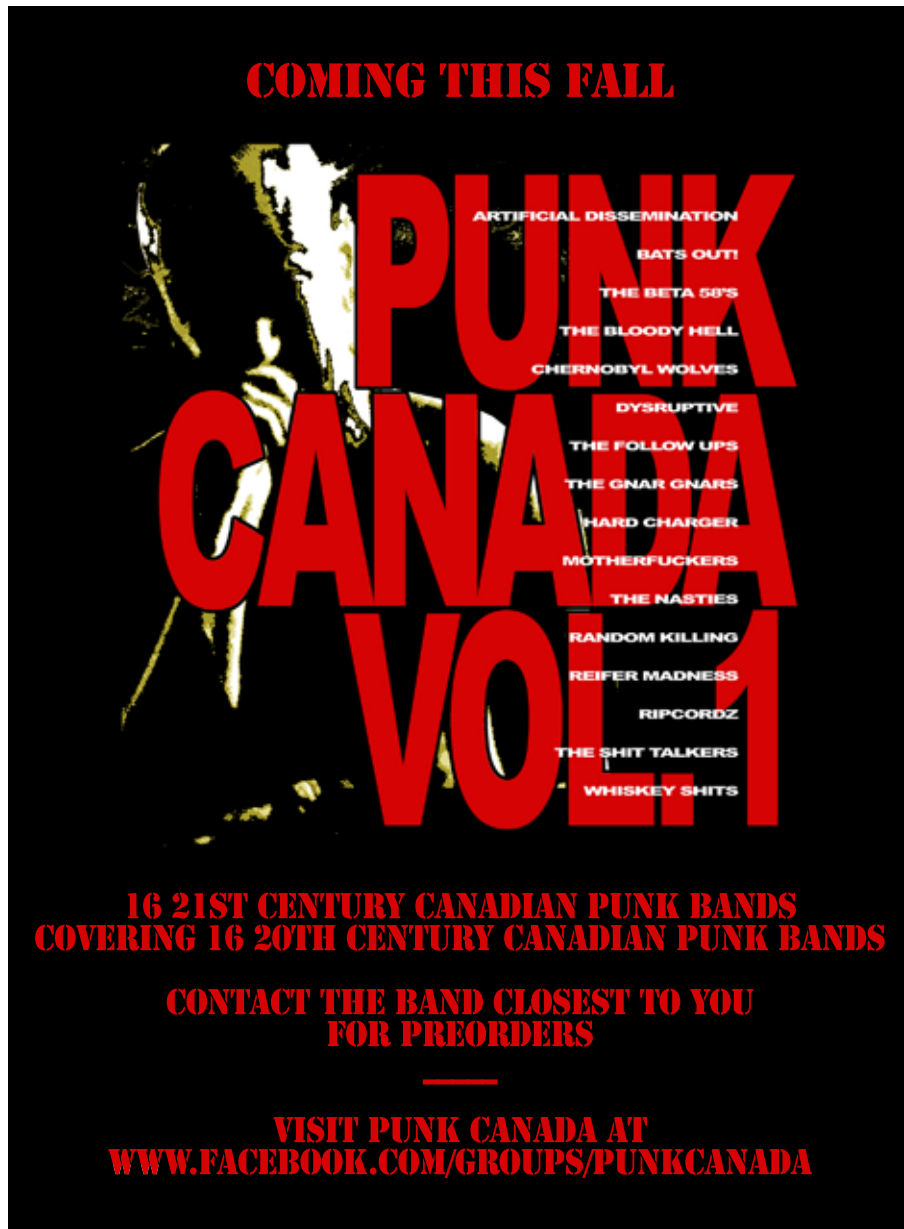
DD: Thanks to our friends at Calgary Underground Film Festival, there is a Joe Bob Briggs live event and screening of Chopping Mall at the Globe on Saturday. Tickets and details at: www.calgaryundergroundfilm.org/joe-bob-briggs-live-show-chopping-mall-film-screening

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Piledriver

By Billy Hopeless

You call him the Pile Driver! You want him the Pile Driver!

Ok, so this is my Canada day column, eh. Today's topic is one of the greatest unrecognized by most hosers beauty Canadian metal artists ever. So quit patting yerself on that weak ass vintage backpatch of Triumph cause he's your god and he's your lord but he'll let you call him your friend. Behold The Pile Driver!

Billy Hopeless: All hail! It is truly and honour to be granted this audience with you the one and only Exalted Pile Driver!

Pile Driver: You are correct. I trust you have performed the requisite ritual sacrifice and note that you have already sworn your earthly allegiance to the High Priest of the Metal Inquisition. Good. We can continue... assume the position. Haha.

BH: The teen Billy back in 1984 when I first heard of Metal Inquisition, which I still consider to be the greatest Canadian metal album of all time, is stoked. What was the genesis and inspiration that led to unleashing such a heavy metal nail spiking assault on our unsuspecting ears?

PD: Quick money. A record weasel and a pop music producer were discussing how no matter how shitty the band was, if they had a decent album cover they sold 4k to 5k albums in the burgeoning thrash/black metal genre. The weasel decided he wanted in, and had the pop music guy listen to some Slayer, Venom and other thrashy dark metal to imitate, record cheaply and make him some quick money with a fake band. They decided that it would be called Piledriver, and the fake frontman had to sound completely insane. I had played bass and vox for the pop dude Leslie Howe in a bar band, and he knew that my peculiar metal vocal stylings and sicko sense of humour would be perfect to bring this insane fictitious character to sonic life. I was young, and eager to make my way upwards in the biz, so, yeah! I signed his bullshit contract, in hopes that my

barks and bellows would bring me to bigger and better things. Not being a lawyer, nor given the time to consult one, I was unknowingly coerced into signing a 'work for hire' contract on the spot, being lied to that it was a 'standard recording

contract' and that all of it. I was paid the grand sum of \$250. Welcome to The Biz, kid! Anyways.. Alice Cooper was in rehab, and left a big open hole for a big badass bad guy for parents to despise alongside the bands that were doing their best to offend. We figured if Piley could be so over the top, so gross, so insane, that peeps would love it, and parents would hate it.

BH: Back in the birth years did you have any allegiance with any other moose metal bands?

PD: Exciter and Shock were the big two, and Witchkiller pulling up in third.

BH: You went beyond ground breaking with no holds barred lyrical topics and songs such as "Sex With Satan," "Alien Rape," "Lord Of Abominations," "Unsuck My Cock," and my personal fave "Sodomize The Dead." Where do you get your poetic prose from?

PD: Thrash/death metal were just getting going at the time... so much of it was going down that 'satanic' route, but we figured there was much more to be shocking, gross, and entertaining about lyrically. We just wanted to be the sickest, most twisted, demented, out-there band with the most abrasive guitar sounds and insane dark humour.

BH: Well it worked quite well for you according to Wickedpedia which states your first two albums sold over 50,000 copies.

HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU

PD: Ahhhh Wiki... so many mistakes and misleading comments and bullshit 'facts'. First off... 50,000? Maybe in Canada... Worldwide the number was closer to 500,000! But, the record weasel cooked his books to make it look like the album was a failure, and generally shut me and Leslie out from any of it. It wasn't until I got an internet connection in 1995 that I found out that not only was it NOT a total failure, but, there were thousands upon thousands of fans around the planet!!! So, yes, Gold and Platinum awards would have definitely been warranted, but, the weasel never reported actual numbers, thus we never received any proper accolades. Fuckin' weasel.

BH: In the 2000s you returned to playing live and released the Live album Night of the Unpolished Turd. Do you have any more live dates planned?

PD: We did about 50 shows in Canada, USA, Germany, Italy, Greece, Amsterdam, Brazil, and Colombia. Then the lineup that held together so well for 10 years finally imploded in 2019, bringing about the end of The Exalted Piledriver for me.

BH: Your discography mentions an album called Jizz Horses.

PD: I have NO IDEA what the fuck Jizz Horses is. Probably something by one of the several other Piledrivers out there that are constantly being linked to me for no reason at all but the name. Sounds like something I'd have liked to write though.. haha. But, I'm sure whatever it is, it surely sucks horse jizz, musically. The ONLY releases that pertain to me as officially released are: Piledriver - *Metal Inquisition*, *Convict - Go Ahead Make My Day*, Piledriver - *Stay Ugly*, *Dogs With Jobs - Shock*, *Dogs With Jobs - Payday*, *Exalted Piledriver - Metal Manifesto*, *Exalted Piledriver - Night Of The Unpolished Turd*. That's it. So far. I can also be found on a few tracks on other artists albums here and there, like a silent stream of noxious gas infiltrating here and there surreptitiously, hahaha.

BH: For a while you took off the nail spiked cowl and were re-employed with a thrash metal group Dogs with Jobs for two albums. Tell us of your career with that Canine crew .

PD: I wrote and produced what I thought was intelligent, engaging and entertaining metal music, and the world at large simply didn't give a shit. Thus, it died ignominiously. Sad really. I really put my heart into the bulk of those songs. I was proud of my lyrics, the riffs, and even my bang-for-the-buck, wing-and-a-prayer zero-budget productions. We shoulda been a contendahhh...

BH: Why were there no music videos for the hits off of Metal Inquisition or Stay Ugly?

PD: Simply because the record weasel REFUSED to put a single penny into Piledriver. He only wanted money coming IN... he didn't want to spend a dime on any of it. That's why it's not even me on the fucking *Metal Inquisition* cover, because he didn't want to pay to bring me to Toronto from Montreal for the photo session. What a cheap fucker! We could have been household names like Metallica or Slayer had the fucker had even a scintilla of foresight or intelligence. I came to him with offers from toy companies and video game developers all looking to do something with Pile. There was a huge wrestling game franchise that wanted to make Piley a boss to beat... Piley's bombastic-belly-bounce was his super power. I truly hope record weasel's since contracted a long drawn out painful and disfiguring disease.

BH: Ok, so here we are in 2022, 37 years later from its initial release and Shadow Kingdom Records have just re-released Metal Inquisition on vinyl, cassette and CD, as well as a wide selection of t-shirts! How does it feel to be back on turntables, CD Walkmans, and boom boxes after so many years in a digital age?

PD: Shadow Kingdom stepped up and took the legal reins to make this happen, and included me from the get-go. I remastered it myself, bringing out more power and detail than you've ever heard in it before. With Canada's true metal queen and honorary Piledriverette, Annick Giroux, we put together a package that makes the original release and subsequent re-releases by the weasel look like, and sound like, the absolute bargain-basement garbage releases they were. On the CD, SKR let me reinstate the teaser acoustic guitar intro to the song "Pile Driver" that the weasel removed without consulting us, and threw in a couple of live tracks to boot. This is what Metal Inquisition should have been ALL ALONG. It's nice knowing that I'm actually getting compensated for my work this time. I have nothing against digital formats, but, this is indeed 'the goods'. I love the PilePuke and Witchburning coloured vinyls. Beeeeyotiful.

BH: Let me thank you oh exalted Pile Driver for this audience and letting me mentally InQuizit the metal inquisitor. Before you go, if the Pile Driver was asked to write a summer fun fun fun hit or theme song to a heavy metal beach party movie, what would the title be ?

PD: "Beach Blanket Babe Butt-Blast Bloodbath"

BH: Any parting words for all the metalheads and general scum scrapers reading this column?

PD: Whatever kind of music you are into, metal or not... cherish it. Enjoy it. Live it. Music is one of the extremely few 'pure' things we experience in this life. Only you have your personal bond with the mental playlist of music that moves you and has enriched your life. Revel in that. Rawk ON!!!

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10 Years of Loud As Hell

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what do you do?

GB: My name is Geoff Bourrie and I am the promoter and organizer of the annual Loud As Hell Festival in Drumheller, Alberta.

AU: When did you have your epiphany to host Alberta's loudest metal fest in Alberta? Why Drumheller?

GB: I had been supporting the underground metal scene by bringing independent touring bands through Drumheller for years before Loud As Hell. I then had received an opportunity to have Kill Devil Hill to perform in Drumheller so a group of us came together to throw a one-time



event that we ended up calling Loud As Hell as we are in DrumHELLer!! We had such a great time we vowed to keep it alive and the rest is history. Ten years strong now!

AU: Looking back on all the years Loud As Hell has been going on, did ya ever think you would be celebrating 10 years?

GB: No, not really. I mean, I can recall the first handful of years, our team always joked about what if we can make this last 10

years. Never thought it would really happen. It all seems surreal at this point. This comes from the help of many, many people that have contributed to the success of the festival. With the people now involved, we could make it to twenty!

AU: What has been your most memorable of the festival to date?

GB: Honestly, each year has special moments and memories that I hold dear to my heart. Overall though, hard to beat the feeling of what the 2021 festival had brought for so many of us. As the pandemic took a stranglehold on live music around the world and with the constant closures and restrictions implied everywhere, being able to provide a place where people could feel themselves and free to express what we all had missed for nearly two years. Seeing all the smiles and receiving all the hugs is something I will never forget. We were blessed with the opportunity.

AU: What can you tell us about this year's 10th-anniversary lineup? How did you choose the bands? Who should fans be keeping an eye out for on this year's lineup?

GB: Going into this year, we really did not know what to expect with the future of the pandemic. We felt that if we kept it an all Canadian line up we potentially could have fewer issues with international flights etc. This is not the first time we have bolstered a Canadian lineup. We are very fortunate to have such a rich culture of metal in Canada. I honestly feel that every band we have performing this year is a band you will want to see.

AU: Where does the slogan Loud As Hell, Drunk As Fuck come from?

GB: The slogan was originally yelled out by members of the band Maimed Wolf from Didsbury, Alberta. Shout out to them for being drunk enough to compliment our fest name in a perfect manner.

AU: What advice do you have for bands who want to apply to play on Loud As Hell in future years?

GB: We generally get well over 300 band submissions each year for a small handful of spots on our roster. Think of ways to get our attention and remember your submission. End of the day though, if you have put the proper time in writing and recording your craft, the music will do the talking for you.

AU: How has it been trying to put together a metal fest post-Covid lockdown and restrictions?

GB: It is business as usual for the most part. Some



things have changed but with the experience, our team has collectively we have transitioned very well. Our main priority continues to grow to make our event a safe place for everyone.

AU: How has it been changing from in-door to Open-air?

GB: We have always wanted to be an open-air festival. It just took a pandemic to kick us in the ass to figure out ways to make it work. Now we hope to be open-air going forward each year.

AU: Anything else you like to add for festival-goers?

GB: You can get all the info for the festival at www.loudashell.ca including information on how to get your ticket for this year's festival.

The festival has on-site camping and also includes a free pancake breakfast each morning.

Children 10 and under are free! RVs and trailers are welcome or pitch a tent in tent city! Look forward to seeing you there to celebrate our 10-year anniversary. And thank you to Absolute Underground for this opportunity. Spread the word...HAILS!

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B.A. JOHNSTON

Hamilton's Favourite Chud

Interview by Ira "Alley Beers" Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous or infamous for?

BA: Hello *Absolute Underground* Reader, I am BA Johnston, creator of the baconator, and human inspiration for *The Littlest Hobo*.

AU: How do you explain yourself when people ask you what you do at a party?

BA: To avoid conversation I say I'm a folk singer as no one wants to go any further on the topic.

AU: What would be the byline of your feature film?

BA: No refunds.

AU: Describe your live show for people who have lost their sense of smell.

BA: A Las Vegas floor show but you are in

Lethbridge and it's not quite as good.

AU: Who did your album art and what are we looking at here for the visually impaired?

BA: Famed Halifax illustrator Paul Hammond did the art, and it's a reimagining of the *Strange Brew* album but with werewolves and the Hostess Munchies.

AU: Wow us with some facts and legends of Hamilton.

BA: The greatest city in the universe with the most sub shops, the best football team, and the right number of one way streets.

AU: Tell us about how much and why Toronto sucks and why it should be nuked.

BA: We should have nuked them before the all moved to Hamilton.

AU: Everyone loves your classic song "My Heart Is A Blinking Nintendo". Will you ever upgrade to a PS5?

BA: Nah, still waiting on my Atari Lynx.

AU: How's your love life?

BA: I am married to the sea.

AU: Now that weed is legal, do you ever partake?

BA: Only while watching *Heavy Metal*.

AU: Who would win in a fight between E.T. and

Alf?

BA: Alf, if you watch the show he routinely beats the shit out of Willy, he doesn't feel remorse either. E.T. has like magic but Alf has the desire to fuck people up.

AU: VHS or BETA? Which is the superior format?

BA: Beta was the superior format with longer running and better tapes. Plus smaller, but no they wouldn't allow porn so they had to die I guess.

AU: Videodisc or LaserDisc?

BA: Laser baby, its the future.

AU: What other obscure formats do you collect?

BA: Atari games, Cracked comics, lava lamps, and VHS.

AU: What are some Holy Grail tapes in your VHS collection?

BA: Best tape I got is *Joysticks*, a forgotten teen sex romp set in an arcade, I also am proud of my copy of *Ice Pirates*. A true must own.

AU: What are some tapes you are still on the lookout for?

BA: *A Gnome Named Gnorm* with Anthony Michael Hall and like a gnome I guess.

AU: Take us through your song writing process if possible.

BA: Honestly I lock myself in a closet with a bunch of Labatts, and just plug away until I either get too tired or until something good happens.

AU: Please explain what a B.T. is for civilized people.

BA: Shit, I forgot the BT is regional. Get a dime, put it in a beer bottle, use a circular motion to create a hole in the bottle. Get a dart, but a tiny bit of hash on the end, then cook the hash in the bottle. Then suck er back. Try not to barf. In Hamilton we stuck a wad of toilet paper on the top to keep the smoke in. For the more civilized you tip the bottom letting out the lighter butt smoke but keeping in the heavier hash toké.

AU: Tell us all the different drinks you have invented.

BA: Just two. Puss Nog. Which is sour puss and eggnog. Also the Ticat, a layered shot of banana liqueur and black zambuca to create a stylish but disgusting shot in the colours of the greatest dynasty in the history of sports.

AU: What was the special Christmas blend that you had to shotgun?

BA: Puss Nog, its actually not that bad. Kinda festive.

AU: What are some of your career highlights and lowlights?

BA: Hmmm. I guess opening for Teenage Head, and Daniel Johnson. Playing a bunch of venues I always dreamed of playing like the Towne House in Sudbury and The Ship in Newfoundland. Plus once I was stuck in traffic and the car ahead yelled "Merge BA!" and let me merge ahead of them. That was sweet.

Lowlights, I just played a backyard show where I think they were like all on a ton of blow and thought I was a comedian called Big Johnson. They also stiffed me 20\$.

AU: Take us through your discography. What

record label are you currently on?

BA: God I'm on like album 13. Can't remember, been putting them out since 1999. Currently on Winnipeg's Transistor 66.

AU: Tell us all about your brand new album *Werewolves of London, Ontario* and tell us about some of the choice tracks.

BA: Recorded on Salt Spring Island during a heat wave. This is oddly the heaviest BA album to date, with songs about above ground pools, pink eye, and wing night.

AU: What's the best brand of alley beer?

BA: Labatt 50, Schooner, Alpine and Olympia.

AU: Has there been a B.A. Johnston beer brewed yet?

BA: Yeah, a short lived malt liquor called Olde Johnston, not that good but not that bad. No Colt 45, though.

AU: *The NeverEnding Story* or *Labyrinth*?

BA: *Labyrinth* baby.

AU: *Rocky* or *Rambo*?

BA: *Rambo* 2

AU: *Gremlins* or *Ghoulies*?

BA: *Gremlins* 2 and *Ghoulies Go To College*.

AU: What makes *C.H.U.D.* one of the most influential films in human history?

BA: Oh man, *CHUD* is the shit. It's my fav movie about cannibal hobos that live in sewers and eat poodles ever. Plus the guy who did the voice on *The Wonder Years*.

AU: Was there any point during the Covid lockdowns where you thought "Shit, I'm gonna have to get a real job?"

BA: Yeah def. Was a hard time. I think what bummed me out the most was not quitting music, which will bum me out a ton, but that I wouldn't be walking away on my terms. Glad to

get a few more years of living in my mom's Dodge Grand Caravan and getting paid in beer and the right half of the menu but no steaks.

AU: *Running Man* or *Demolition Man*?

BA: *Running Man*. The book and the movie. Dawson 4 life.

AU: How do you train your body to perform all your feats

of strength on stage like the David Lee Roth jumping crotch stretcher and the down & dirty worm maneuver?

BA: It's best if you don't think about what you are doing and to watch so much live Diamond Dave you can just do his moves from muscle memory. Plus stretch pre-show.

AU: How is your mom? Does she know what you do after dark?

BA: I think she's happy to be in the dark with what I do in the dark. But she's good. Busy at church.

AU: What don't you want your mother to know?

BA: Got no secrets from mother. Actually the mushroom use. We don't discuss that much. Though she does comment on the lava lamps.

AU: Ever thought about filming a show about your life similar to Tom Green

where you torment your parents?

BA: Got one its called *Ham Jam* and it's out on



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YouTube, filming Season 2 as we speak.

AU: Explain how people can have you play their driveways and backyards.

BA: Give me monies and I'll come and play a show at your house or shed. No pits.

AU: What are your thoughts on the loss of Logan's Pub in Victoria, BC?

BA: Man, this one hurt. I loved Logans and had been playing there since 2003. Best staff and it always felt like I was crashing a party thrown by long lost cousins or something. The bar always took care of me and really I owe a lot of my success in Victoria to Logans. It's not gonna be the same and I will probably drive there by accident before I realize I'm at the wrong spot.

AU: What brand of portable CD player are you rocking on your current tour?

BA: Memorex baby, I mean a Blackberry Passport.

AU: Where is the best place in Canada to purchase a "What Are You Looking At Dickhead" sweatshirt?

BA: From me, got exclusive rights, in that I am bootlegging them and selling them out of the trunk and no one else is doing that.

AU: Tell us about working with the guys from Sons of Butcher on their animated series and is it true you are a character in the new season?

What is your character all about and what did you bring to the table comedically?

BA: I play BA Butcher, long lost brother and we just did a pilot. I did as much as I could with a role in which I was given the script 5 mins before we started filming. Got in some good ad libs about the *Phantom of the Opera*.

AU: Best poutine and or submarine sandwich in Canada?

BA: Fromagerie Lemaire in Drummondville for poutine, Paradise Subs in Hamilton for subs.

AU: What sort of sponsors have you had and or are you looking for?

BA: Red Fucking Lobster is my dream and hopefully one day my reality. Got turned down by Jäger in the mid 2010s.

AU: Any tours or festivals planned for the summer?

BA: Got one festival in Elora called Riverfest. A shit ton of backyards all over Ontario from Thunder Bay to Port Sydney and then a Maritime run of bars and backyards in the fall.

AU: Have you ever hung out with the guys from Fubar or Trailer Park Boys? If so, any funny stories to share?

BA: Once I played Amigos in Saskatoon and the Trailer Park Boys showed up and set up camp in the green room, to go back there you "had

to be a chick". I did go back to get changed and made some small talk with Bubbles who had played there in a band called Sandbox. I chat with Deaner oddly on Instagram sometimes. It's pretty sweet. He's been supportive which blows my fucking lid. Deaner! That feels pretty good as I loved *Fubar* and *Fubar 2*.

AU: Tell us more about your Ham Jam TV show.

BA: Doing Season 2 right now, out around X-mas 2022. Covering all things Hamilton plus I turn into Guy Fieri in an episode, which is weird.

AU: Any plans in the works for the next album yet? Any title ideas you can share?

BA: Next album will be called *Argos Suck*, it's done and in the can.

AU: Any aspirations in life? Do you have a 5 year plan?

BA: I wish. Play driveways, eat donuts, drink Labatt 50. Wash rinse repeat.

AU: What's a movie, a concert, and a restaurant from the 80s that would combine to make the ultimate experience?

BA: *Heavy Metal*, Dio and Chuck E. Cheese.

AU: What is the music scene like where you live and what are the good bands there?

BA: Hamilton always punches above its weight with bands, TV Freaks, Lee Reed, The Imploders, Astral Witch, and of course Teenage Head, still

ripping it.

AU: What would you do differently if you were the Prime Minister of Canada?

BA: Legalize mushrooms, make the song "Heavy Metal" by Don Felder the national anthem and take over a Toyota plant and give everyone in Canada a Previa. Plus free fireworks.

AU: How does it feel to finally be on the cover of Absolute Underground

magazine?

BA: Dude, this is the second cover I've gotten in 20 years of doing shows. Thank you so fucking much.

My mom won't be as stoked as the time I got in the *Globe and Mail* but for me this is more dope.

AU: Final words of wisdom for our readers.

BA: If you take mushrooms and listen to the live album *Cheap Trick at Budokan*, and then start the film *Heavy Metal* right after, you will peak during a Cheap Trick segment in the film. Don't believe me? Try it out buddy. Also, always order the largest pizza.

AU: How do people find you online?

BA: I'm all over the interweb. Twitter, Instagram, FB and I think I'm on TikTok for some reason. Not sure why.



bajohnston.ca
bajohnston.bandcamp.com
transistor66.com



B.A. Johnston Werewolves of London Ontario

By Cody No Teeth

The CHUD has returned from his mother's basement with a brand new album, and it's one for the ages. *Werewolves of London Ontario* is by far the highest produced album B.A. has ever released. Long gone are the days of the preset Casio beats, replaced by flowing synth wave melodies and saxophone interludes. Where B.A. used to mostly play his acoustic guitar solo, he's now backed by a full band. The sense of joy in his song writing has always been apparent, but WOLO feels like it's coming from a different place. A place where donair runs rampant and wrestling is always on the television. Even though songs like "GM Can Sit On It" (Oshawa 2018) and All My Teeth Are Gonna Fall Out Of My Head have a political vibe to them, these songs, while sometimes a little heavier in lyrical content, will still put a smile on your face. And no matter what the subject of his songs are, they



are always catchy and will have you singing along after the first listen. Tracks "Only 2 Things I Wanna Do (Doritos N U)" and "I Don't Buy No Government Weed (Still Buying From Steve)," feel like they could be from the soundtrack of a lost 80's movie. While tracks "My Last Shift At Timmies," and "Thrift Store Jesus" could fit right at home on any of his older outings. My personal favorite track on the album is easily "The Cannon Logo Will Get Me Through Tonight."

This song encompasses everything I love about B.A. and his quirky way of mixing 80s nostalgia with personal subject matter. B.A. sings about things that he loved as a child and has carried forward as an adult. I can completely relate to this, and songs like Cannon Logo really hit home for me.

The album art, designed by Paul Hammond, is also a thing of beauty. Paying homage to Bob and Doug McKenzie's movie *Strange Brew*, while also adding some images that only Canadians would pick up on. The Humpty Dumpty chip logo and The Littlest Hobo flying in the background are just a couple of examples (you can try and figure out all the rest yourself). Like most of his albums, WOLO is filled with instant classics, sing along anthems, and hilarious jabs at the world according to B.A.

WOLO showcases just how much B.A. has grown throughout his 20 year music career. He is still one of the hardest working musicians in all of Canada, constantly touring in his mom's minivan, packed to the brim with merch.

If B.A. isn't on the road, you'll likely find him in the studio recording his next album. B.A. started out in the early 2000's playing dive bars while riding

the greyhound bus from city to city, selling burnt CDs of his music. Even though he's still playing in dive bars, most of his albums are now available on a majority of formats including; vinyl, cassette, CD or digital. During the pandemic, B.A. would stream online for people who were stuck at home, giving the hungry fans a nice taste of his live show. All of the money he made from these online shows he donated to various food banks and other charities. I can remember the days when B.A. would play a show in Calgary to five people; Strumming his guitar in the street while strangers passed by with bewildered looks on their faces. Most



people didn't know what they were getting themselves into when they came to those shows. This shirtless man dancing around on the tables, snot rocketing onto himself, and then performing the worm on the dance floor. It was very surreal and unlike most touring musical acts of the time. Now if you go see B.A. perform it will most likely be a sold out crowd, and a good amount of the audience will be wearing one of his shirts while singing along to his songs. And that's all because of how much effort B.A. has put into, not just promoting his unique brand of aggressive folk / synth wave music, but also putting on one of the most entertaining live shows you'll ever see. The first time you see B.A. play is like nothing you've ever experienced before and you'll constantly be chasing that high. Six months later, when B.A. comes back to your town, you'll get to experience it all over again. However, this time, you will have a new found appreciation of his bizarre style of song writing and clever lyrics. In between songs B.A. will arouse the audience with jokes, tales of living in Hamilton, or his unique take on a strip tease. Although it can be comical, it is always sincere. B.A. has shown everyone over the last two decades that his music is what he's most passionate about, and as a result, his fan base has grown exponentially over the years.



B.A. Johnston

BA Johnston has been traveling Canada spinning tales of despair and the joys of bad life choices like a modern day Stompin Tom, with 13 albums to date. Classics like 'My Heart Is a Blinking Nintendo' and 'Sleeping With My Walkman On' and 'Dirtmall' always get the crowd singing along, after seeing him once or more. The songs seem to take from travels to the many Canadian cities and towns that he has played or lived in over the years of touring, lately including 'laneway' shows in yards and laneways across the nation. His stage show is a one man band full of surprises and attacks the room with the humour and antics that keep the crowd on edge and involved with his music. BA is a definite artist to see live and visit the merch table to grab up an LP, t-shirt or even a children's book that he wrote called 'Gary The Seagull' and chat with a legend.



- Sarah Fowler

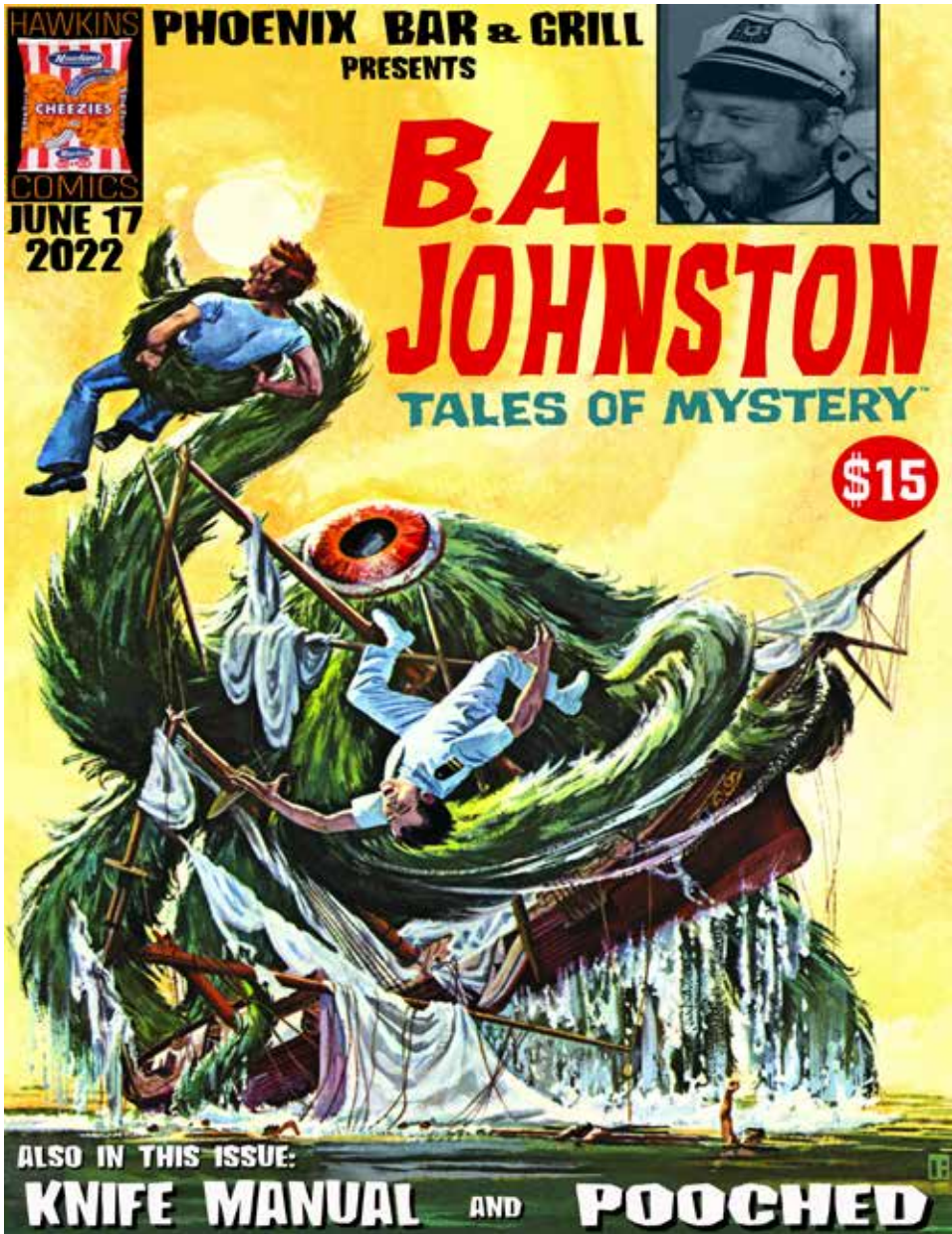


"We're All Going To Jail (Except Pete, He's Gonna Die)"
"Sesame Street Fighter"
"I Miss 90's Hash"
"Moving To A Ski Town"
"Jaws 3"
"You Had Me At Montreal Steak Spice"
"Sourpuss"
"No Wanna Shambhala"
"Drivethru Beef"
"Too Messed Up To Be In This Canoe"
"I Need Donair Sauce"
"IKEA Hotdog"
"Nuke Toronto"
"Shitty Cat"
"Female Kryptonite"
"Have Fun on Warp Tour"
"My Heart Is a Blinking Nintendo"
"Jesus Is From Hamilton"
"I Don't Want to Go to the No Frills"

B.A. JOHNSTON'S DEEP DISH CUTS

Enjoy our staff picks of B.A. Johnston songs. We hope they knock your socks off, you laugh your ass off, and don't forget to turn your deep fryer off.

"Deep Fryer in My Bedroom"
"Why Can't Tonight Be Wing Night"
"Chud Love"
"Dirtmall"
"Stairway to Hamilton"
"I Don't Buy No Government Weed (Still Buying from Steve)"
"Don't Marry A Jabroni"
"Only 2 Things I Wanna Do (Doritos N U)"
"You Will Miss Me When the Zombies Come"
"Your Roomates A Couchetard"
"Quarantine Supreme"
"Pitfallin For You"
"How Many T-Bone Steaks Can I Fit in My Pants"
"I Am A Robocop"
"Fuck The Counting Crows"
"There's a Hair in My Donair"
"GST Cheque"
"My Last Shift At Timmies"
"The Fart That Got Away"
"This Pink Eye Has Got Me Down"
"I Don't Use Self Serve Machines"
"I Want to Drink in a Bar with Aliens"
"I Rock The Hawkins"
"Discounted Bacon"
"Sister's Hash, Mom's Smokes, Dad's Whiskey"
"Flintstones Vitamins and Jamesons"
"Circle The Bowl"



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Paul Hammond

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what are your skills to pay the bills?

PH: I'm Paul Hammond, and I'm an illustrator, artist and sometimes a comics guy. Mostly I just like drawing and making stuff, so I kind of try a lot of different things.

AU: How long have you been an artist? What got you started?

PH: I've been pretty heavily focused on art basically since I was a kid, but I guess "professionally"... I've been doing illustration and design for probably around 20 years give or take a few.

AU: How would you describe the art you create?

PH: It takes a lot of forms, so it's hard to describe what I do sometimes.. but I guess that overall, I like to make stuff that's fun, often weird, sometimes kinda cute, and I really like kind of scrappy line art, pretty bold colour. I tend to like stuff that has a slightly vintage feel..

I was a screenprinter for a long time, so I tend to have a real soft spot for limited colours, and colours that are misaligned slightly.. I like the look of mistakes - it's kind of where you get to see the hand of the person who made the thing.. in the accidental parts.. so I like to leave things fairly loose and fun when I can. I dunno if that's very clear, I never know how to explain my art. Honestly I really like drawing dumb little dudes. Maybe I should have just said that.

AU: What are some of your favorite projects you've been involved with?

PH: I've worked on a bunch of pretty fun stuff in the last little while.. I think what's funny about my work is that I end up doing so many totally different things. I illustrated a kids book that B.A. wrote, which was published by Nimbus Publishing in 2020, called *Gary The*

Seagull. That was a lot of fun. And recently I've been working with a brewery in Paradise Newfoundland called Banished, designing their whole line of cans, which has been a lot of fun. They really gave me total free rein over it, so I think we're making some pretty cool looking can art! Oh and I did a huge map style poster for a *Star Trek* themed podcast called "The Greatest Generation" a couple of months ago.. that's one of my recent favs! They were great to work with, and I'm a big nerd so it was just really fun to go pretty wild drawing all sorts of little *Star Trek* characters and scenes.. I also did little two frame style super simple animations for a bunch of the characters.. it's pretty funny. Actually going back in time, I used to also do a lot of collaborative artwork with my friend Seth Smith using the art name Yorodeo. We spent nearly 10 years making these really elaborate hand screenprinted anaglyphic 3D (the kind with red/blue glasses) art prints, and exhibiting them. That was a really fun,

long-lived project that I still think we may revisit eventually.. we're just both a lot busier these days.

AU: When did you first meet B.A. Johnston and what were your first impressions?

PH: Oh man, I think the first time I met him must have been in like... 2004 or something? Maybe earlier? It was definitely at The Khyber club in Halifax.. he was playing a show.. this was way before his show had gotten so elaborate..

he was just a dude in a trucker cap with a super beat up guitar, sitting on a wooden chair, and he probably had a discman & a casio keyboard for some of the songs.. I remember my friend Laura grabbing my arm and saying "You have to watch this guy, he's gonna blow your mind", so I did, and I remember that I really liked it, and also was a little bit confused about exactly *what* he was doing. Which I think is maybe something that people may still feel when they see him for the first time even now. It's a pretty unique thing he's got going.

AU: For B.A.'s new album *Werewolves of London, Ontario* what direction were you given before starting the cover art project?

PH: Literally every time B.A. asks me to make something new for him, the

direction is hilarious. He's really the only person I do this specific type of art for. This time he told me the name of the album, and said "I want it to

be like the poster for *Strange Brew*, except I'm one of the McKenzie brothers, and we're both werewolves" and I was just like "Wow, OK man, I'll see what I can do!". Actually I was really excited for this one because I grew up in London, Ontario so immediately I had all these ideas for funny things to reference. We have this running gag where everything we do is just a cultural mash-up, and the *Strange Brew* poster has a lot of characters on it.. and it's not like London Ontario has a huge amount of truly recognizable characters we could put in there... so I was just filling it with as many 80s can-con, or sort of PG spooky-comedy adjacent references as I could, to fit with the theme.. I basically wanted to just fill it with all the weird stuff I loved in my youth, but set in London Ontario.

AU: Describe the album cover for the visually impaired if possible.

PH: It's a pretty wild illustration... the central figures are Rick Moranis, and B.A. in place of Dave Thomas, as Bob & Doug McKenzie... they're both smiling and holding beer bottles.. but also both of them are werewolves. In the foreground you have Elvira Mistress of the Dark, and Spike Nelson from Degraasi on each side.. and then they both have Hostess Munchies marching down their arms, holding hockey sticks. Haha.. man, when you put this into words, it just sounds totally ludicrous. It's like I'm describing some weird, mostly canadian fever dream. OK then behind B.A. and Rick Moranis, you have Vincent Price from the *Hilarious House of Frightenstein*, (which was a Canadian production, and one of my favourite shows as a kid) the wolfman radio jockey, also from Frightenstein, and Cyril Sneer, the villain from the canadian cartoon *The Raccoons*. All of this is set in front of a sort of spooky, misty landscape of London Ontario landmarks, including the Labatt factory, Call The Office (RIP), The Embassy (RIP) and Storybook Gardens, which was, and probably still is a very run down, nursery rhyme themed park with rides in London. Humpty Dumpty is sitting on the roof of the castle, but specifically, it's the old Humpty Dumpty chips logo. In front of Storybook Gardens, you've got Teen Wolf (the original) surfing on top of B.A.'s classic Previa minivan.. and up in the sky, crossing in front of the moon, you have my favourite part, which is The Littlest Hobo, flying through the air with a bindle. *The Littlest Hobo*, by the way, was not only a Canadian production.. but the first dog who played The Littlest Hobo also happened to be named London.

AU: Any other hidden talents unrelated to art?

PH: I've been in a bunch of bands over the years.. always just as a singer.. most recently Cold Warps, a garage punk outfit.

AU: Tell us about any comic book projects you have worked on.

PH: I did a long running comic strip called "Hey You Guys," and later "Hey You Goofs".. it was published in *The Coast* in Halifax, and I've put together a few self-published zine-style

ARTIST PROFILE

books of it.. I also have a short, 10 page comic in an anthology called "Nova Graphica", which is a collection of comics about Nova Scotia history. Mine is a story I illustrated, written by,

and starring my friend Dusty, who tells a ghost story about his great great grandfather, based on historical events.

AU: Do you take commissions? What's the strangest thing you've ever been asked to draw?

PH: I do! I've been doing this funny ongoing series now and then called "Paperback Pets".. where I do ink and watercolour pet portraits, but in the style of vintage

paperback book covers. Usually sci-fi, or mysteries.. but it's pretty open. I mean, you could pretty much name anything I've drawn for B.A. as one of the strangest things I've been asked to draw. But recently I did a "Paperback Pets" portrait of a very pretty cat named Millie, but it was in the style of a fictional book cover from *The Royal Tenenbaums* called "Dudley's World" which is just

this gangly teen with flip up sunglasses and a bucket hat staring dead-eyed into the camera... so this is Millie the cat, in a bucket hat, with flip up sunglasses.. and it's called Millie's World. That was a pretty funny one.

AU: Dream project you are still dying to do.

PH: Ah, they're all kinds of dream projects before they get done! haha. I have a number of graphic novel ideas that I need to find the time to work up into some

concepts and try to get off the ground. I'd love to design book covers for new editions of classic old sci-fi books. Like, I'd really love to illustrate and design book covers for pretty much all of Ursula K LeGuin's books, but especially the *Earthsea* books, or *The Dispossessed*.

AU: Any words of wisdom for our readers or aspiring artists?

PH: Hm... I'm not sure how wise anything I have to say is... but in terms of drawing/illustration...

something I feel really strongly about is don't fix all the weird, wonky lines, or dumb bits in your drawings. They're almost always where most of the charm resides - just let some of the mistakes hang out, you'll probably like them later on.

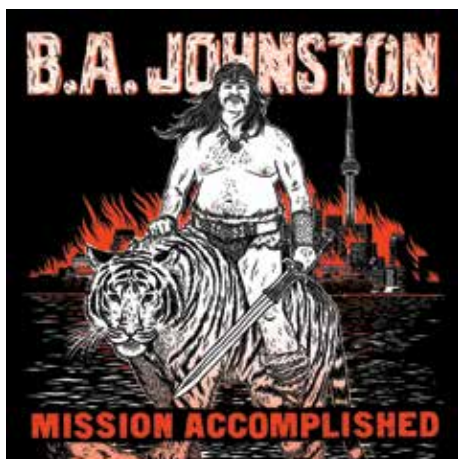
AU: Any upcoming projects or exhibits to promote?

PH: I actually have another kids book coming out July 26 with Nimbus called "The Terribly Horrible Smelly Beach", written

by Jacqueline Halsey and Carrie Muller.

AU: Where can we see examples of your art?

PH: You can see a lot of my work at www.paulhammond.com or on instagram @paulgeorgehammond



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Victoria Ska & Reggae Festival

Interview with festival organizer Dane Roberts
By Iree-I

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

DR: My name is Dane Rudo Roberts and I'm the Artistic/Executive Director for the Victoria BC Ska & Reggae Society. I'm best known for presenting the Victoria Ska & Reggae Festival, refereeing soccer and creating and having good times.

AU: If possible, briefly tell us the history of Victoria Ska and Reggae Fest?

DR: Victoria Ska & Reggae Festival was inspired by the third wave ska movement which I was introduced to by my late great friend Matthew Bishop. He used to DJ a radio show at CFUV 101.9FM in the late 90s called Skankster's Paradise that aired weekly on Tuesdays from 6am - 9am. So we'd often party together and then do the radio show. We were very close friends. Unfortunately he died in a tragic rock climbing accident in 1998. Our friendship mixed with my passion for bringing people together through music created a strong community which made fertile ground to create the Victoria Ska Festival. I produced the first festival as part of my final work term at the University of Victoria where I was doing my B.A. in Education majoring in Leisure Service Administration. The strong community that was built during and after Bishop's death helped me form my production company called "Enigmatica Entertainment" which produced the festival for the first four years in partnership with CFUV

101.9FM. Then in November 2003 we created our own non-profit Society called Victoria Ska Society. And now 23 years later here we are!

AU: What is your mission statement when organizing this event?

DR: Victoria BC Ska & Reggae Society entertains, educates, and unites audiences nationally and internationally through the artistic development of ska and other Jamaican rooted genres such as reggae, rocksteady, and dub, among others. The Society also presents musical genres connected to Jamaican rooted genres including but not limited to various styles of Caribbean, Latin music,



soul, hip hop, punk, jazz and world-beat. The Society aims to present a diverse line up that includes both international and national bands that play music connected to and that compliments music from Jamaica. Other genres often include soul, Latin/ South American styles, music from different

Caribbean Islands and African countries, hip hop, folk and punk.

AU: Who are some of your favorite acts who have performed at your festival in the past?

DR: Toots and the Maytals, Barrington Levy, Shaggy, Fishbone, The Mighty Mighty Bosstones, Western Standard Time Ska Orchestra, Blitz the Ambassador, Tanya Stephens, Freddie McGregor, Ozomatli ft. Chali 2na and many more

AU: What makes Victoria Ska and Reggae Festival a unique experience?

DR: The vibe of the festival is one you don't feel anywhere else. The energies of thousands of awesome people all in one place is something you can only experience by being there. Also all the bands are insanely talented and also stoked to be there. There is no attitude or negative vibes. It's a festival that is family friendly and extremely entertaining for the whole family. You can bring your kids and they're safe there but the parents

can also have a blast at the same time. No matter your age you can always have a blast at the festival. You just experience it in different ways depending on your age and where you're at in your life.

AU: Who are you really excited about having at the festival this year?

DR: I LOVE ALL THE BANDS SO MUCH BUT... I'm really excited to see Three Houses Down ft. General Fiyah, The Wailers, King Yellowman & K'reema, Kobo Town, The Capital Collective, and Tanika Charles to name a few.

AU: What's different this year from years past?

DR: This year we will be using the Victoria Curling Club for all ages ticketed shows. That's a big change because we used to use small clubs on the weekend. We hope these two Curling Club shows will be successful so we can continue to do this each and every year after this.

AU: Apart from all the great music, what other activities and events are happening during the festival?

DR: I want everyone to note that we also have amazing visual arts and artists that contribute to the festival by creating beautiful visual arts in different mediums. You will notice the artwork at the Ship Point and Victoria Curling Club sites. We also love the fancy international cuisine we serve to those that venture to purchase the VIP Full Fest Pass. Thanks to Eric Holden for doing this for us for five years and counting! They will be treated to some yumminess I tell ya!

AU: I would also assume there will be beer and food trucks? Who will be involved? Stir It Up? What brewery this year?

DR: We have Stir It Up, Greek On the Street and we're in the process of confirming two more. Parallel 49 will be our beer supplier this year.

AU: Final words for fans of Ska and Reggae out there.

DR: Besides the fact that Victoria's 23rd Annual Ska & Reggae Festival has over 30 bands from Jamaica, Colombia, Brazil, New Zealand, England, West Indies, USA and Canada, we just wanted to remind those that are aware of it or that attend it that those involved do it for the sheer passion of creating an event that has a positive impact on their own life and others around them. Now in the festival's 23rd year I'm starting to see the second generation grow up to adulthood which is somewhat surreal to me. But I love it because it shows how much a rich arts scene can impact

our community and those living outside of it.

Also we hope that the festival will serve as an example of an event where everyone can have a great time regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, financial status or any other factors. It is in my opinion what makes the ska/reggae scene so inviting because no matter who you are, provided you come with an open heart and positive intentions you'll find enjoyment, friendship and love in the scene.

That's why I keep doing it year after year.

AU: Anything else you would like to mention or promote?

DR: The festival is extremely affordable in every way possible. All tickets, beverages and merchandise are set at prices that almost everyone can afford. We hope we can be an example of a festival that can still succeed without charging high prices for tickets and other goods and services.

The festival also has a program called Rocksteady Arts Collective that is the visual form of expression for the festival based on the music presented. Be sure to check out all the beautiful



artwork at Ship Point Inner Harbour and the Victoria Curling Club when you come.

Finally, for those that have trepidation about coming to the festival because it's called "Ska & Reggae Festival" please look at the diversity of the lineup. We call it Ska & Reggae Fest but the festival is laden with all kinds of groovy music so don't be afraid to give it a try. This year the festival is more rooted in reggae, global roots, funk and other genres that compliment Jamaican rooted music .

Tickets are available on ticketweb.ca and through the following outlets:

Victoria: Destination Greater Victoria Info Boothe on Wharf Street

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Nanaimo: Fascinating Rhythm

Vancouver: Red Cat Records and Highlife Records

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Victoria Ska & Reggae Festival

By Blake Morneau

Despite the genres that make up its namesake, Victoria Ska & Reggae Festival has become renowned for being one of the most musically diverse music festivals in Canada while staying true to its mission of highlighting Jamaican-rooted music. The influence of Jamaica's musical culture is vast, and the festivals lineup reflects that reach. Reggae and ska live here obviously, but there is nearly something for everyone. Funk, hip-hop, punk, calypso, something called "Brass House" and even funky breaks are in abundance at this years festival, once again emanating from the heart of Victoria's Inner Harbour.

Victoria Ska & Reggae Festival strives to build real community through music each and every year. This year is no different with a majority of shows being all ages, three days of completely free programming on the main stage at Ship Point, and free artists workshops during the festival. Three years have passed since they were last able to welcome the world of music and they're fixing to make up for lost time this year.

King Yellowman

Reggae is a genre with an overabundance of incredible, captivating singers, but few have remained as vital and powerful for a longer time than the mighty King Yellowman. Abandoned as a child, facing discrimination in his community for being albino and losing half of his jaw to cancer, Yellowman's defiant perseverance has fuelled his career and made him a source of light and inspiration for millions of music lovers. His most famous single, "Zungguzungguguzungguzeng" has been a staple of reputable DJs everywhere, being sample and remixed countless times. You don't need to dive deep into his catalogue to find gem after gem of reggae and dancehall classics like "Nobody Move Nobody Get Hurt" or "Strong Me Strong". While not his first time in Victoria, this is the first time King Yellowman will be joined by his incredible talented daughter, vocalist K'Reema. Their single, "Fathers Love" was an instant hit with reggae lovers upon release and when they take the stage together in Victoria, it promises to be something pretty special.

La Real Del Sonido

Probably the heaviest band on this years festival, La Real Del Sonido is one of the wildest bands to come out of the fertile musical community of Bogotá, Colombia. They've built their reputation on a hard-hitting signature mix of ska, punk, hip-hop and a more-than-light dollop of high energy nu-metal. La Real Del Sonido sings songs of rebellion, non-conformity and conscious living, without ever forgetting to make a crowd move. It doesn't matter where they play or who they're playing for, La Real Del Sonido is going to hit you in the face with their completely unique musical

offerings.

Rude City Riot

One of Vancouver's most downright fun bands, members of the legendary Stomp Records and one of the coast's greatest keepers of ska/punk, Rude City Riot is one of the most exciting bands on the festival this year. Their 2021 album Shady Schemes & Molotov Dreams is a perfect blast to your ears when you need a pick me up and has been powering us down to Road to Ska

& Reggae Fest. More than ten years of rocking the hell out of skanking masses around the country has helped build the legend of Rude City Riot to the point where they could not be ignored anymore. They'll be making their Festival debut on the main stage, kicking off Thursday nights FREE show.

Five Alarm Funk (Canada)

For over a decade, Five Alarm Funk has been setting dancefloors on fire and assaulting audiences with their relentless grooves, driving percussion, soaring horns and undeniable energy. The band has a consistently great catalogue of albums – like *Sweat* (2017) and *Big Smoke* (2020) – but it is the live Five Alarm Funk experience that has given the band near-mythic status from the Pacific to the Atlantic. There is nothing like the experience of seeing Five Alarm Funk spread across the whole stage – Such is the unique power of this band that all who witness their rhythmic glory will be given to movement, compelled to dance by forces they can't even be begin to understand. On any given night Five Alarm Funk could blast you into the atmosphere on a weightless whirlwind of musical wonderment or drag you deep into the sexy, sweaty centre of the Earth – but no matter where they lead, you will be safe alongside these Titans of Groove, Monsters of Funk. There are none mightier in the land than FIVE ALARM FUNK.

Too Many Zooz

In this day and age, viral sensations come and go in the blink of an eye. There aren't many that have taken the opportunity to really stick around in the collective consciousness in the way that Too Many Zooz has. A busking trio from New York that hit the mainstream when one of their performances became a YouTube phenomenon in 2014, Too Many Zooz is unlike anything in music today. The band's signature sound, which they call "Brass House", is a completely unique blend of jazz, house, Afro-Cuban sounds, heavy EDM – all played live on horns and percussions with an unmatched kinetic energy. Each of these dudes

is an absolute beast on their instruments and their talent is only matched by their stage presence. Their busking background has given them an ability to connect with a live audience in a way that other large-venue touring acts seem to struggle with. If you haven't

caught the wave yet, a Saturday night is a perfect night to start. Bring dancing shoes.

Street Pharmacy

Ontario alternative reggae outfit Street Pharmacy is the brain-child of Métis singer, guitar and primary songwriter, Ryan Guay. No, literally, after receiving treatment for an acute case of encephalitis – swelling of the brain – Guay discovered he was left with the ability to write compose and produce prolifically. Street Pharmacy hit with a potent blend of reggae, hip-hop, dub and rock with an edge and a passion that take their music to another level. Guay's ability to switch from machine-gun flow raps into his big singing voice is always impressive to

hear. Check their latest single, "Love Astronaut," released in May, for a perfect example of everything the band does well in a bouncy, heavy four-minute blast. At a festival famous for finding peoples' new favourite band – Street Pharmacy is bound to make some fans radars.

The Steadies

Straight up, the Steadies are one of the coolest bands in Canada. The Saskatoon-based group plays a relentlessly groovy blend of funk, reggae, world-beat and rock. Their musical diversity has helped make their shows musical havens for music lovers of all ages, genders, races and genre allegiances. Frontman Earl Pereira – formerly of Wide Mouth Mason, favourite of Big Shiny Tunes lovers everywhere – knows how to rock a crowd and he's supported by some seriously talent musicians. A set from The Steadies is always delivers deeply soothing grooves and a music that demands you pay attention and feel better about being alive.

Three Houses Down feat. General Fiyah

A 12-piece, all-Māori reggae powerhouse from New Zealand, Three Houses Down is making their Canadian debut with Victoria Ska & Reggae Festival, where they're playing two full-length feature sets – including headlining Night 1 on the Inner Harbour main stage. The band plays some of the sweetest, most gorgeous roots-reggae music, highlighted by the sublime harmonies of brothers Rob, Sione and Charlie. In 2016, Rob's son, known to reggae-lovers as General Fiyah, brought his heavenly voice to the band at the age of just 10. Now 16, General Fiyah remains one of the most captivating singers in reggae with stage presence that cannot be denied.

Curtis Clear Sky & The Constellationz

Indigenous-led Curtis Clear Sky & The

Constellationz, based out of Vancouver, BC, has been on a tear since their inception, lighting up audiences wherever they go with their insanely funky, hip-hop grooves and conscious message. A melting pot of music and cultures unto themselves, the band creates a truly unifying musical experience that reaches to the core of what makes music so great. Clear Sky's incredible voice delivers powerful, thoughtful




lyrics that bounce around the bands deeply funky bass, anchored by an incredible drummer and topped off with some choice DJ scratches. Catching one of the coast's dopest funk bands before the Wailers is more than a win.

Kobo Town

Kobo Town has been one of Canada's most interesting and endearing bands since they formed more than 15 years ago. Formed by Trinidadian-Canadian singer/guitarist/songwriter Drew Gonsalves, Kobo Town combines the traditional calypso of Trinidad & Tobago with ska, hip-hop, reggae, dub and flourishes of punk building a reputation as one of the most dynamic and exciting live bands in the country, regardless of genres. Earlier this year Kobo Town released their fourth full-length album *Carnival of the Ghosts* – an album that reaffirms their position as premier story-tellers on top of being top-shelf musicians.





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The Wailers

One World

Interview with founder Dan Doherty

Interview with drummer and bandleader Aston Barrett Jr.
by Iree-I

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous for?

ABJ: You are speaking to Aston Barrett Jr. I am now the leader of The Wailers. My father is Aston "Family Man" Barrett, the original bass player and architect for Bob Marley and the Wailers. I'm also the nephew of Carlton Barrett, Bob Marley's drummer. Aston "Family Man" Barrett and Carlton Barrett, they are brothers. So they called them the Barrett brothers, drum and bass.

AU: Who was your grandfather?

ABJ: My grandfather is Joe Higgs, the godfather of reggae. Joe Higgs is my grandfather from my mother's side. My father and my uncle were original Wailers from 1969. All the way up until Bob's death and then continued on. We've been wailing and wailing. My father retired in 2016 and I've been running the band since then.

AU: What was your childhood like?

ABJ: My childhood was amazing. I was surrounded by music and the Rastafarian culture. I also learned about the different tribes of Rasta, the Nyahbinghi, Bobo, and The Twelve Tribes. You learn the difference of everyone but you also realize that everyone still represents one, you know?

AU: Why do they call your father the Family Man?

ABJ: Because when you're around him you feel this love and this comfort. He's a man that takes care of people. If he sees someone in need he will do his best to help. He is what you call an angel so you can feel this angelic presence from him. And he has a lot of children as well. But that came after he was a Family Man from before. I would say I kind of have that same kind of feeling. I have one kid but when people around me I tend to just always find a way help someone somehow.

AU: His bandmates in The Wailers called him the Family Man before he had any children. Is it true that now he has 41 children?

ABJ: That's what they say, I don't really know. He told me he had 43. But it would be wrong for me to say because there's so many interviews and things around the place that have different numbers every time.

AU: What do you remember about Bob Marley?

ABJ: I never met him, I was born in 1990. I just knew growing up that he was one of the best. My father speaks very highly and respectfully of him, saying that Bob was on a mission. The Wailers were on a mission and they decided that they were going to spread their seeds all over the world. By spreading the seeds with the message of their music and by having children. Basically having children in different places of the Earth to spread their seeds because they were chosen from the Most High. That was a way of spreading love. Because everywhere in the world was different. You have places that have never seen other cultures, that are very stuck into their cultures. There's even different cultures that never wanted to mix. My Father and Bob said we're going to break that. Once you have kids with their children then the grandparents are going to have to be forced to love the kids. Then they'll see a difference in their upbringing, that their upbringing was just out of ignorant and it's time to change. They did it a diplomatic way, not by

war, they did it by peace. That's why all of us are mixed.

AU: After Bob Marley passed away did the band go on hiatus or did The Wailers continue on?

ABJ: The Wailers continued on. There was a few members that just left. The only people that kept the band together was Family Man and Carlton. After Bob died Tyrone Downie left and my father was taking care of Earl "Wire" Lindo because, his mental wasn't too there. So my father had to keep him under control. It was really just my father and Carlton and then Junior Marvin and Al Anderson they came and they left. Then in 1985 they started to try and tour again properly as The Wailers, so Junior Marvin and Al Anderson came back and then in 1995 they all left again. So my father had been carrying it ever since until 2016 when he retired.

AU: What was the first band you joined? Is it true you were only seven years old?

ABJ: Yeah, I joined a high school girls band. I was the only boy. It's called Holy Childhood High School it's in Jamaica. The band was playing reggae and one day I walked over and showed them that I could play bass. They were playing my father's music wrong. When it comes to my family's music I'm very picky. Either you play it right or you don't play it. I was like that then but now I'm like okay you can do your remix, it's fine. But once you're in The Wailers you have to play it the correct way. So that's why I wanted the girls band to play it the correct way. When they heard me play, they were like "Oh, my gosh!" and I joined the band. Later, when I moved to America I joined Julian Marley's band The Uprising.

AU: What do you attribute the continued popularity of The Wailers to?

ABJ: The Message. The message and the feel. Wailers music has no category, you have to remember that. It's not new and it's not old, it's just there. It is a spiritual music. So when you speak of spiritual music, when you speak of spirits, spirits can never die, your soul can never die. That's what Wailers music is.

AU: When Bunny Wailer was still alive did he perform any shows in Jamaica with the Wailers?

ABJ: No, Bunny Wailer left the band in 1972. But they did two tribute shows, they did a show together in 1974 and then the Dream Concert 1975 and that was the last time he performed with Bob and The Wailers. But he did help on the *Confrontation*

album, my father said. When Bob died, Chris Blackwell, the founder of Island Records, and the band got together and they wanted Bunny and Peter to come and help with the last album. Bunny and Peter came to have a meeting but Peter didn't come back. But Bunny came back and helped a lot with the *Confrontation* album. He helped with the arrangement of horns like on "Buffalo Soldier" and "Trench Town." He didn't sing on it but he helped.

AU: Can you tell us about the first album that the Wailers have released in 25 years called One World.

ABJ: We started the album before the pandemic, and then when we were just about to release it, the pandemic came. All the songs seems like we were writing this music for the pandemic but these songs were written before. This album was produced by Emilio Estefan. When I took over The Wailers my father said, before you make an album you have to make sure it's properly recorded first. After Bob died we all tried and it didn't feel like it was the right time to make a Wailers album. Because Bob and the message was so powerful and they always wanted

a producer. They wanted Quincy Jones and they couldn't get him so they learned how to produce on their own. So I was blessed to do a concert and I met the great Emilio Estefan and he came to me and he proposed and asked if he could produce an album for us. I said yes. My father told me to have an open mind. That many will say things but remember you have an opportunity, you're in a position that Bob and I wanted and now you have it, so take it. That's what I did and that's how we created *One World*.

AU: Are there plans for another new album as well?

ABJ: We're working on it right now. We already started two songs. Every song that we write, we try to speak about experiences that we went through. So they are songs that can relate to everyone, just like a Bob Marley and The Wailers music did.

AU: Are you looking forward to partaking in the legalized marijuana Canada has to offer?

ABJ: Yeah man. Herb is good when it has no chemicals. Nothing with chemicals is good. So we believe in pure herb. We believe in good farmers that can grow the highest herb. Herb that is beneficial for just living a great life that has no side effects because it's all natural.

AU: What makes the ganja in Jamaica different from the rest of the world?

ABJ: Because in Jamaica we have red dirt, red soil. If you grow a seed in America and then grow a seed in Jamaica, the nutrients down there are lot more stronger. Certain places in the islands has rich soil with more minerals and vitamins. That's why it's important to save the earth and not overdo things, everything in moderation.

AU: Who else is on this current tour with you in The Wailers?

ABJ: Everyone here is a student or family of The Wailers. Like Owen "Dreadie" Reid, he's my father's student, he joined The Wailers in 1985 playing rhythm guitar. Our keyboard player is Tyrone Downie's student and Tyrone Downie tours with us in Europe as well. Sometimes we have other original members join. We are preserving the music now because no one is going to be here for forever. But we have to keep the music alive forever. I'm keeping it strong and I'm bringing it to the next level but keeping the original vibes.

AU: What can people expect from The Wailers performance at Victoria Ska and Reggae Festival on June 24th?

ABJ: It's going to be amazing. We're going to come with a few of the new songs and we will also play some of the hits and some other songs from The Wailers catalogue. It's going to sound so real when the music hits you, you will get goosebumps. You are going to hear the way reggae music is supposed to sound. It will be to spread peace, love and music. Anyone who is in a bad mood they should come to our show and that will change to a happy mood.

AU: Any final words for people planning to come and see you at the Victoria Ska and Reggae Festival?

ABJ: We're gonna have a funky reggae party and just remember, be blessed.

thewailers.com

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06/16-CALGARY-DICKENS	06/27-QUEBEC CITY-LA SOURCE DE LA MARTINIERE
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06/20-THUNDER BAY-BLACK PIRATES CLUB	
06/22-HAMILTON-DOORS	




Rebel Priest + Deadwolff = Rebelwolff Tour

AU: Deadwolff, this is your first West Coast tour, how did the two bands decide to team up for this tour?

Rebel Priest: Me (Jayme) and Tom met in a hot tub and our love of being sweaty was what triggered this. Hahaha

Deadwolff: I've known Jayme for a few years and had hit him up for some contacts out West because Deadwolff was planning to do a West Coast run. Jayme proposed the idea of both bands hitting the road together and it just made sense! We're super stoked to head out there.

AU: Both bands have EPs out, Deadwolff - Self Titled and Rebel Priest "Lesson In Love", who's



CD is the better-looking beer coaster?

Rebel Priest: Well in all honesty, it really depends if it's a can or a glass. See, if you like butts and horror and a good glass of whiskey, definitely "Lesson In Love" cause the glass will make the butt more in your face. Now the Deadwolff album is great for cans because the triangle is bright and you can't miss the target in case you've had a few too many wobbly pops. They both have strengths but come on, who doesn't like a good butt?

Deadwolff: Since we only have cassettes it may be a little tricky with our EP.

AU: Maple Leafs or Canucks, who sucks more?

Rebel Priest: Canucks... next question?

Deadwolff: Go sports.

AU: Choice, Play on top of the CN Tower? or on top of Mt. Robson?

Rebel Priest: Mountains are way cooler, the mosh pit might have a bear or a mountain lion thrown into the mix! Can't get more metal than nature!

Deadwolff: Both sound exhausting.

AU: What's better? Toronto street meat? or Vancouver Sushi? and why?

Rebel Priest: Bahaha! Fuck, why is all delicious food in the shape of dicks!? I can say for myself sushi no question, because mystery meat gives me the shits, but that's not to say I ain't gonna try it twice to make sure I did it right the first time.

Deadwolff: Toronto Street meat. But people give you a weird look when you drown it in mustard.



AU: Who has the better Mary Jane?

Rebel Priest: BC bud is a worldwide religion.

Deadwolff: Don't know. But our beer prices are definitely better.

AU: Deadwolff's favourite Rebel Priest song? and Rebel Priest's favourite Deadwolff song?

Rebel Priest: Dude, that ripper "Pedal To The Metal" is a fucking establishment! By far my favourite! Though I do end up drinking a lot to "Double Up", hahaha!

Deadwolff: I really dig the new single, "Lesson In Love."

AU: If each band had to trade a band member with one another, who would go?

Rebel Priest: I (Jayme) and Tom are already starting an all bass band called Low End Boys. All bass all the time.

Deadwolff: Not sure. I guess we'll have to wait and see once we all become more acquainted.

AU: Could there be a future supergroup called Rebel Wolff?

Rebel Priest: Fuck yeah!!! And our first album will be called "Dead Priest", gonna be the best funk fusion electro calypso band in history!!

Deadwolff: For a case of beer, you're welcome to use the name, haha.

AU: You pick up a hitchhiker, they need a ride back from Vancouver to Toronto with Deadwolff, but there's just one catch, if they want the cross country free ride, they need to tag along to every tour stop with both bands first. How would you convince them this will be the best hitchhiking experience of their life?

Rebel Priest: Do you like parties? Do you like weed? Do you like Rock n Roll? If you answered no to any of these questions then I think you should

find another ride, son! If you do then, sit tight and hold your britches cause it's gonna be a ride to remember!

Deadwolff: With these gas prices, that ain't happening.

AU: Anything else ya would like to add?

Rebel Priest: "Lesson In Love" is out worldwide June 24th!

Check out our videos for "Lesson In Love" and "Divebomber" on YouTube!

And come to the shows!! We wanna see all you beautiful people!! Trash N Roll my hood buddies!!!

Deadwolff: We're very excited to come out to the West Coast. See some old friends, make some new ones, and play our hearts out. Check out the tour dates, hope to catch ya at a show!

Rebel Wolff Tour w/ Rebel Priest and Dead Wolff
June 24 - Vancouver, BC - Have A Good Laugh Festival. *Afternoon show - Deadwolff only
June 24 - Vancouver, BC - Lana Lous
June 27 - Maple Ridge, BC - The Wolf Bar
June 28 - Kamloops, BC - Pogue Mahones
June 29 - Kelowna, BC - Missions Tap House
June 30 - Lethbridge, AB - Theoretically Brewing
July 1 - Calgary, AB - The Palamino
July 2 - Edmonton, AB - Starlite Temple

rebelpriestofficial.com
rebelpriest.bandcamp.com
facebook.com/officialdeadwolff
deadwolff.bandcamp.com





THIRTEEN GOATS

Interview with Graham K. Miles - vocals & guitars

AU: Who are you, where are you from, and what does the band do?

We're four guys in Canada with family roots in the former Soviet Union who play a blend of extreme metal derived from multiple subgenres. We keep it heavy and hooky, with just enough melody that the songs can get stuck in your head after we bludgeon you with them. The core songwriting duo consists of myself and Rob Fitz-Gerald, although the upcoming album also features a few songwriting contributions from our friend and founding bassist Mike Redston of Snakeblade. The new guys are drummer Leonid Verman (formerly of Stalwart), and bass player Cody Lewichew (Wrong Answer).

AU: The band is releasing its debut album on July 1st. What can ya tell us about the record?

The record is a lot of different things—including death metal, black metal, thrash metal, and groove metal—but above all else, it's genuine. We worked really hard to incorporate elements from various extreme metal styles and draw inspiration from our heroes without falling into genre clichés. We also didn't limit ourselves when it came to our lyrical subject matter. Some of these songs have serious political messages, while others are about things like putting your enemies in vacuum-sealed chambers and turning up the pressure until their heads explode. We fully reject the trend of bands putting themselves in boxes. We have a consistent sound, but we also believe that metal at its best includes the freedom to create without dogma or gatekeeping.

AU: What do you want new fans to discover and take away from this album?

We hope this record shows fans that metal can be authentically heavy and aggressive without sacrificing strong songwriting or compelling storytelling. Extreme music is just as capable of taking the listener on a journey as any other kind, some journeys are just darker than others.

AU: We read that you got into a motorcycle accident during the recording process and performed all your guitar solos on the record with a broken finger and both wrists sprained. That must have been super painful, what was the motivation to do it and not wait till you were fully healed? Did it teach you new tricks

to get around playing a certain way?

In terms of finding the motivation to play through the pain, there was really no other choice. I'll be honest; this was a really tough record to make. The songs were all written two years ago, but the recording process kept getting delayed. Like many other bands, we were set back by COVID complications, but we also lost our original rhythm section and the producer we had been working with, which was deeply demoralizing.

At that point, Rob and I were already facing a ton of doubt. It was starting to look like the whole band would collapse before our first record was even finished. And then, just when we thought nothing else could possibly go wrong, I dropped a 660-pound motorcycle on myself going through a hairpin turn on Burnaby Mountain. Suddenly I couldn't walk properly or bend either of my wrists. I just about lost it. Looking back at it now, I know I got incredibly lucky, it could have been so much worse, but at the time, I had no idea how much I would heal or how long it would take. All I knew was that if we waited any longer to make the album, it was never going to happen.

Ultimately, what it came down to was: "commit or eat shit". Either I had to play in spite of my injuries, or our dream was going to die. So I started doing every rehab exercise I could find and drilling basic guitar exercises until I could move my hands

again, and then I kept going until my speed started to come back. It didn't happen overnight, and I'm not going to pretend I nailed everything on the very first take—but eventually, I was able to play the parts I'd written cleanly enough to track them.

In a weird way, I think do-or-die moments like that are gifts. They show

you exactly how much you care. Rob and I don't resent anyone we parted ways with during this whole ordeal, but there was a long stretch where it felt like no one except the two of us believed in these songs, or in each other. We felt like a death metal version of Bill & Ted. And if our belief hadn't been tested so rigorously by the accident, who knows? Maybe we would have given up too. I'm glad we didn't.

AU: You are a classically-trained Shakespearean actor with a master's degree in theatre. Will the band be taking advantage of this talent and showcasing a theatrical live

show with its performance?

One area where we're already using those skills is in our music videos. Our first official video was animated, but we just finished shooting another one, and it's all live-action. I play a very prominent character in the story that's happening between shots of the band playing.

In terms of our live show, we'd love to reach a point where we have the resources to go really big with it, the way bands like Iron Maiden and Judas Priest have done. I'd love to have a 20-foot-tall animatronic mascot and full pyrotechnics—but that costs the kind of money death metal doesn't normally make, so I think we'll have to get creative with whatever we can scrape together. One thing I can promise is that we'll always do our best to play with a ton of stage presence and inject the music with a flair for the dramatic—whether we're doing shows in stadiums or in the backs of greasy dive bars.

AU: A Stephen King villain inspired your opening track 'Servant of the Outer Dark,' who is that villain and why them? Anything else on the record inspired by literature?

There's a character in The Dark Tower who also appears in numerous other King novels under different names, the most notable one being Randall Flagg from The Stand. He's kind of a Jungian trickster archetype, this very charismatic, almost gleefully-evil presence who is always showing up to wreak havoc and challenge the heroes in ways that force them to confront unpleasant truths about who they really are. He's one hundred percent bad news, but he's also a lot of fun, and I think that's really consistent with what the essence of what metal is, at least for us. It's about luring people out of their comfort zones and getting under their skin in a way that ultimately promotes greater self-awareness and

critical thinking.

The only other overt reference to literature on the record is in the song 'Prisoner's Anthem'. The song is about different prison-industrial complexes throughout history, including not only the gulag but also the ones that have existed in our own backyards: North American residential schools, internment camps, and detention centers for undocumented immigrants. As Canadian artists with strong roots in Eastern Europe, we saw the parallels between these systems and tried to write a song that would make them clear to listeners. That might make some people uncomfortable, but maybe it will also encourage them to care more about holding their own governments accountable for their actions.

AU: Live shows are making their comeback now, any plans to tour in the coming months? Any local Vancouver shows planned?

You bet. We've got local shows coming up on July 3rd and July 13th, and we anticipate many more to come. We have no immediate touring plans, but it's definitely something we want to do. So if you're in a band and you're reading this, feel free to hit us up.

AU: Anything else you would like to add?

Check out our fully-animated lyric video for 'Return to Ruin' if you haven't already. Our animator, Marvin Camlich, and his illustrator, Frank Hisashi, did truly incredible work on a song that we feel is especially relevant right now. It focuses heavily on the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, which as a band fronted by a Ukrainian with two Russians and an Armenian in it, we have some pretty strong feelings about. The video captures everything we're trying to get across: the style of our music, our pitch-dark sense of humor, our political sensibilities, and our connection to our Eastern European heritage. Give it a watch—and stay tuned for more.

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SVNEATR

AU: Congrats on your Prosthetic Records signing, what can ya tell us about signing with them and releasing the band's third record?

Thank you! Well, first, we're really stoked to be able to bring this 3rd record to a wider audience with Prosthetic. They've signed some awesome bands and put out amazing records over the years and to be counted among them is insane.

They've been great so far but I was taken aback by the love we got from other bands on the label. Got messages congratulating us and it was cool to have that team or family vibe coming into this.

AU: Any insight to share on the new record?

We're still in the process of recording it but the bass and guitars are almost done. I'll be doing vocals when we get back from this tour we're

doing in June and then sending it off for mixing/mastering. We love working with Ryan Shepard (mixing/mastering on Chinook) so he'll be handling the mix again.

We really worked hard to make these songs as good as possible. We did multiple rewrites and had discussions on pretty much every track. It's a bit of a mixed bag. We opened up a lot on the Chinook album but we took it a step further. The black metal sound is more like a subtext for the whole album, while there are doom riffs, death metal sections, and more of that progressive influence overall. It's dark, heavy, and emotionally draining.

AU: You will be hitting the road this summer with Denmark's Hexis across Canada, how did you guys get the nod to be their support?

We were booked to open their Vancouver show, saw that they were continuing across Canada, and reached out. Shoutout to those guys because

they've been great as well. It's been a scramble to contact all the venues but it was fairly painless.

AU: How does it feel to be back on the road? What can people expect from the band live?

It feels amazing. We're going to a lot of places we've never been to and just to have the opportunity to drive across Canada is something not a lot of people get to do in their lifetimes. You can expect energy and hunger.

AU: Will SVNEATR be performing any new music from the third record?

Perhaps. We're also doing a few we haven't played in a long time, even before the pandemic.

AU: Anything else you would like to mention?

Just want to quickly thanks to Prosthetic, Hexis, all the promoters/venues, and Taylor McDonald and Edison Pang for filling in and helping out. If you're planning on coming out and you're not feeling well, stay

home. We're stoked to be playing again but if we get sick, it puts the whole tour in jeopardy.

If you haven't seen us before, expect thunder and snarling wolves. If you've seen us before, no you haven't.

Winds Across Canada Tour – Svneatr supporting Hexis

June 10 – Temple – Edmonton, AB
 June 11 – Black Cat Tavern – Saskatoon, SK
 June 12 – Cloud Nine Live Bar – Regina, SK
 June 13 – Bulldog Event Centre – Winnipeg, MB
 June 14 – Black Pirates Pub – Thunder Bay, ON
 June 15 – Fraser Tavern – North Bay, ON
 June 16 – Cafe Dekcuf – Ottawa, ON*
 June 17 – The Atria – Oshawa, ON
 June 18 – Doors Pub – Hamilton, ON

June 19 – See Scape – Toronto, ON*
 June 20 – TBA – London, ON
 June 21 – Queens Hotel – Barrie, ON*
 June 22 – Overtime Sports Bar – Kingston, ON
 June 23 – Turbo Haus – Montreal, QC*
 June 24 – Le Murdoch – Sherbrooke, QC



June 25 – Le Tavern Royale – Trois-Rivieres, QC*
 June 26 – TBA
 June 27 – Bar A Piton – Saguenay, QC
 June 28 – Rimouski Underground – Rimouski, QC
 June 29 – Monteith Manor – Woodstock, NB
 June 30 – Broken Record – Fredericton, NB
 July 1 – Gus' Pub – Halifax, NS

*without Hexis

RIPCORDZ

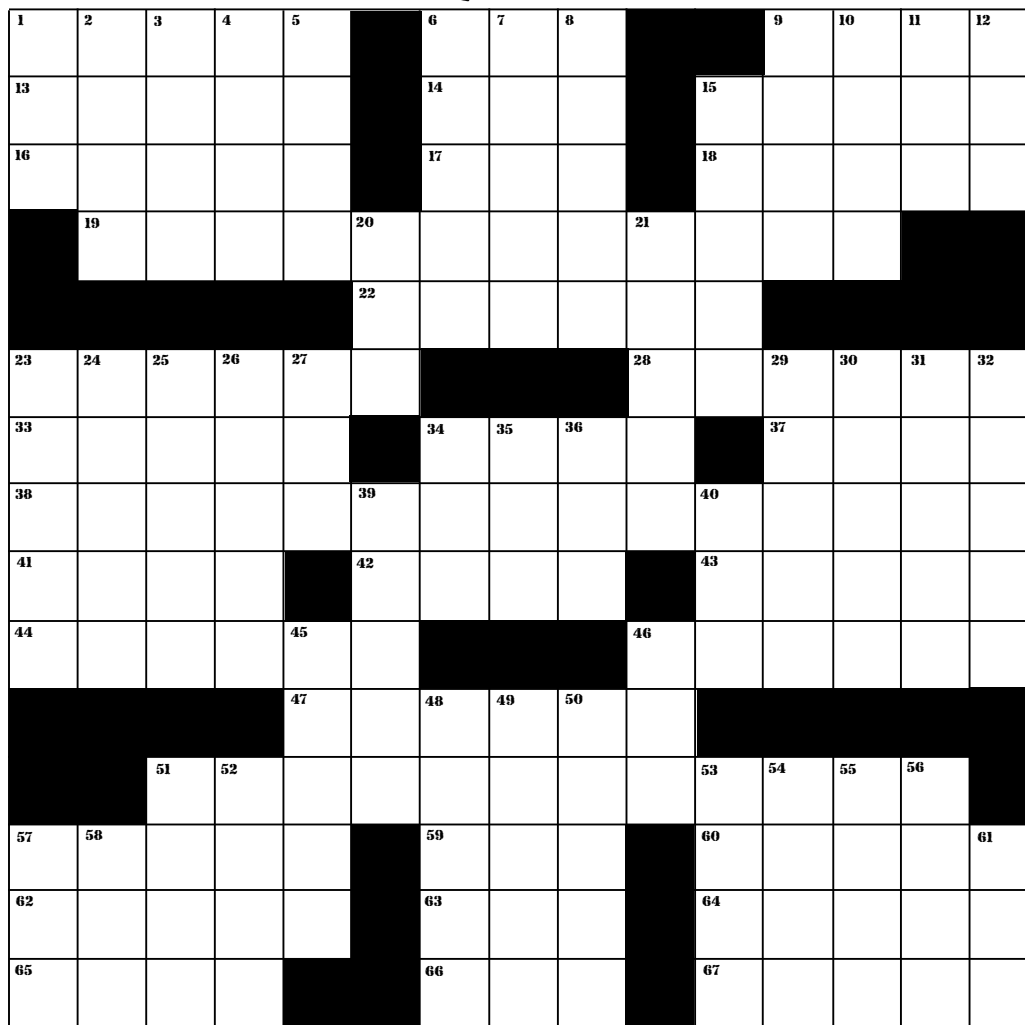
PROUD TO BE

ACROSS

1. _____ Sabbath
6. Pursue relentlessly
9. Stinky explosion
13. _____ Picchu
14. Abbr. on many Parisian signs
15. Hannah of the Subhumans
16. Sweet sandwiches
17. Opera's "O Sole ____"
18. Property contract
19. Three-word expression of extreme exasperation
22. "You ____!" (insult or emotional evaluation)
23. "Ain't That ____"
28. Adams uncle
33. Portion
34. Star Trek's Seven
37. Raced
38. Colourful Victoria band
41. Chevy subcompact from '02-'20
42. Both (prefix)
43. Celeb photographer Leibovitz
44. Some quiz options
46. Beginning
47. There's a big one and a little one in the night sky
51. Expression of an extremely angry evangelical?
57. Keith "Monkey" Warren is one
59. Sign of Summer
60. Broken (Fr.)
62. _____ Void
63. Fortified central Asian town
64. One type of flu
65. A device that provides material to a machine
66. Occasionally obnoxious chant
67. Source of stem cells

DOWN

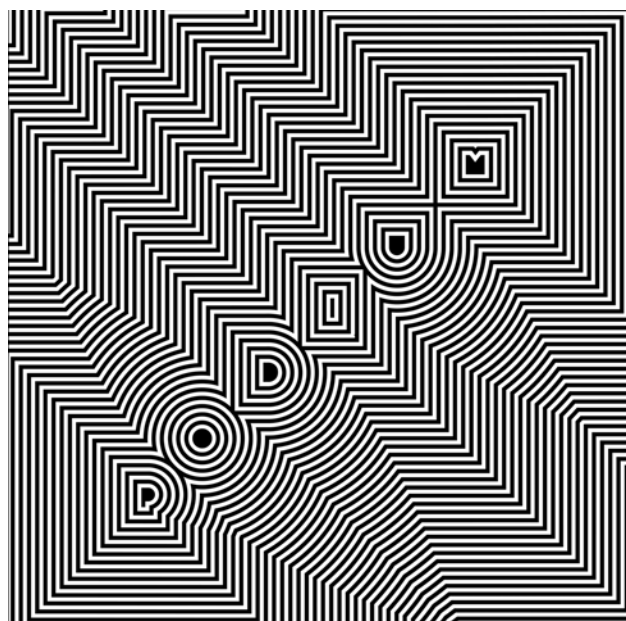
1. Big Canadian bank
2. Angelina played her in film
3. Serving great
4. Fruit core (British)
5. Pot
6. Raise objections
7. Chilling
8. Understands intuitively
9. Experience an emotion
10. Mostly dried-up Asian sea



CROSSWORD NO. 69

SUMMER, 2022

11. CN and CP
12. Sheridan who played Cyclops
15. Move smoothly
20. Supernatural beings
21. Infidel in Islam
23. As clear _____
24. You can have a close one
25. Soul singer Isaac
26. Most common noble gas
27. Crooner Tormé
29. Fixed period of work
30. Roger and Jessica Rabbit
31. Bert's pal
32. Band before Simple Plan
34. Mod-Punks (with The)
35. Slow down
36. Many a Louis in France
39. Gallaghers' band
40. Greek alphabet's 19th letter
45. Keats' "_____ A Grecian Urn"
46. You can dig it
48. Rice dish
49. Tires in Tadoussac
50. First name of A-bomb plane
51. You can turn on one
52. Killed, in gangsterese
53. Its logo is a maple leaf in a blue circle
54. Musician Grohl
55. Michael Jackson's "This ____"
56. Eldest son of Isaac
57. Canine welcome
58. Bambi's mom, for one
61. Typesetter's spaces



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Slipknot
In This Moment
Wage War
Rogers Arena, Vancouver B.C.
April 17 2022.
The show, which was opened by In This Moment and Wage War was the final stop on their 20 date U.S. and Canada run. (Wage War added to the show after Ukrainian metal band, Jinjer officially canceled their upcoming North American tour dates, including this run as part of the Knotfest Roadshow to focus on the war that has broken out in Ukraine. Jinjer has also launched a merch capsule to raise money for Ukraine) Slipknot will continue with their travelling Knotfest Roadshow on May 18th with another run of selected U.S. and Canada dates, this time with opening acts Cypress Hill and Ho99o9
All images by Colin Smith Takes Pics shot for Absolute Underground Magazine

ZZ Top
Cheap Trick
Save-on-Foods Memorial Centre, Victoria, BC
Friday, 22 April 2022

Some Friday night, coming to your town – the Little Ol’ Band from Texas - ZZ Top! The parking lot area awash with rockers ready to bury their lost COVID-19 years in shit beer, and remember better times.

More than a few empty seats in the crowd... but why? Legit, where better do you have to be on a Friday night in Victoria, than with “Rock n Roll Hall of Fame” players? Were the empty seats due to the end of the longest running unchanged lineup in rock, over fifty years – finally broken with the loss of bass player/vocalist Dusty Hill, who passed last year. His bass roadie of 20 years, Elwood Francis was ready to take up. Was it viewed as “the magic is gone”? Maybe paying to hear what’s on classic rock radio a dozen times a day?

Cheap opened with a colourful backdrop and busy stage. Guitar player Rick Nielsen swung a variety of trademark obscure axes around, and a few notable hits came through, in particular the crowd-pleaser “I Want You to Want Me.”

ZZ took stage. They’ve been playing beer halls for decades, they know how to do it. The Reverend Billy Gibbons on guitar, putting on a clinic for guitar players - pentatonic blues rock; none finer. This band makes any room seem tiny, with between song stage banter, synchronized shuffling movements around the stage. Career spanning highlights of “Jesus Just Left Chicago” into “Waiting for the Bus”, and “Sixteen Tons” from Merle Travis, and the ever crushing ode to sweet south Texas border hookers “La Grange”.

This band took us through the 1980s and early MTV music videos as the characters of benevolent Texas ghosts, bringing momentary paradise to the downtrodden working man... dancing up in the stands with beer in hand you can feel it... long live ZZ and catch them while you still can, before they are all ghosts...

-Erik Lindholm

Photo: Colin Smith Takes Pics

Apocalyptica
Lacuna Coil
The Palace Theatre, Calgary AB
April 24, 2022
It has been two long years since Apocalyptica postponed their North American *Cell-0*

tour, and within those two years, the band has kept busy as the virus raged on, releasing the non-album singles “White Room” and “I’ll Get Through It.” The two year wait has also given the fans time to get acquainted with their 2020 album which shares the same name as their tour - so with their arrival to the Palace in Calgary, both the fans and the band were ready for some neo-classical mastery, a little bit of Metallica and a few region-selected surprises.

First off though, were Lacuna Coil. The Italian goth-metal band has been around Canada a few times, and certainly played off those past experiences, speaking to the crowd as if they were old friends. In comparison to other female-fronted bands, I have personally always liked Lacuna Coil best, and can’t really explain why - though perhaps it’s the power of the songs. Upon playing “Heaven’s a Lie,” it’s realized that the band have true classics which stand the test of time, and despite not reaching the heights of say Evanescence in terms of sales, they have earned the street cred.

I formerly saw Apocalyptica in Tokyo during the 2017 Loudpark festival. At this show, they had a strict time limit of around 45 minutes, meaning their set was tight, focused and extremely memorable. With a headlining tour, the band certainly expands on this, adding elements which justify the hour-plus set length. As the band have several albums to choose from now, including their most recent, they have a lot of original material to choose from. Touring vocalist Franky Perez made his presence known early, though never overstayed his welcome, singing on select songs throughout the set including “Shadowmaker” and “I Don’t Care.” Of course, the band’s famed Metallica covers were not forgotten about, though left to the final third of the set, where the energy was at its peak. “Nothing Else Matters” and “Seek and Destroy” were the picks for this night, which led to a classical medley and the first few notes of “Oh Canada” which led the crowd to sing the entire anthem. It made me wonder if the band learned the national anthem for every country they go to. Band leader Eicca Toppinen seemed to have trouble saying goodbye to the audience -the band seemed to not want to leave, and the crowd felt the same.

-Ryan Dyer

Opeth
Mastodon
Khemmis
May 4, The Grey Eagle Resort and Casino, Calgary AB

Opeth and Mastodon - two of the most important metal bands of this generation. You could also compare the bands pretty closely, even calling them brothers from different mothers. They both started off as much heavier versions of their current selves, and have changed their sound at least twice along the way. So the twins have conjoined again for this tour, which will surely go down as one of the greatest double-billings of all time.

For this trek they’ve also brought along Denver, Colorado based Khemmis, who could be considered the runt brother of the bill - sharing a lot of the same musical motifs as the dual headliners, though not being nearly as experienced and well-known. While many of the fans in attendance were waiting in line to get an Opeth or Mastodon shirt and missed Khemmis, those they did play for showed the band respect and gratitude, letting them know they can rightly stand on the same bill as the two legends. Their warm-up set was good enough to headline a smaller venue

on their own, and they’ll surely go on to greater things.

Who deserved the headlining slot? Opeth and Mastodon are about equal when comparing their influence, though the edge has to go to Mastodon for being more popular in North America, at least. Still, Opeth was the headlining band for this tour and I believe the right decision was made - they deserve the respect and by being top-billed, perhaps fans who are just into Mastodon could be introduced to the band.

As this tour was in support of Mastodon’s new album *Hushed and Grim*, several songs were chosen to be played. “Pain with an Anchor” opened the set, and from the opening chords to the extended, chugging, callback to pure sludgery outro, the song, as well as those that followed, had an energy that brought out the best facets of the studio recordings. They ended the set with “Blood and Thunder” and afterwards, demi-god drummer Brann Dailor got off his throne and thanked the audience personally, which took so long it was like an encore in itself.

Some have complained that Mastodon or even Opeth are boring live and that the bands just stand there - well, well, firstly, these bands are about the music, and secondly, they have both added trippy visuals to this tour via a few huge screens. With Mastodon, swamp monsters and Russian cathedrals aided their songs. With Opeth, the visuals were a bit more elemental - heavy rain, lightning, fire - not distracting from the songs, but rather actually complimenting them - which is a nice change from a big Opeth logo. The band, led by the ever dryly humored Mikael Akerfeldt, played an eight song set - and with each being 10-plus minutes, is more than enough. The light favorites were mixed with the heavy ones - “Ghost of Perdition,” “The Drapery Falls” and the classic “Deliverance,” which Mikael referred to as a gangsta rap song, filled the classic-heavy quota. “In My Time of Need” filled the melodic quota and “Sorceress” filled the new era quota. Each song chosen for this tour basically proved the legendary status of Opeth, and if they played before Mastodon with this set, it would have felt wrong.

- Ryan Dyer

Opeth
Mastodon
Khemmis
Doug Mitchell Thunderbird Sports Centre, Vancouver, BC
Saturday, May 7, 2022

Protip for future UBC shows: 1) read your ticket carefully 2) Thunderbird Stadium and Thunderbird Sports Center are different buildings...

Arriving at the last of Khemmis set, walking past massive merch and beer lines; impressed with their sound and approach. They were in full effect with closer “A Conversation With Death” - a sharp doom band to watch for.

Mastodon took stage, armed with albums of groovy, melodic, yet radio and awards friendly tunes (Grammy winners in 2018). Their insane visuals paired well with esoteric song themes. With full- colour lights shining down, a variety of fast moving lasers, multiple busy video screens of animals, animations, visualized nature footage – a feast for the eyes and ears. Their mix was notably crushing and loud, everything came across clean, the energy of the band was easy to grasp. Familiar tracks

“Megalodon” and “The Czar” blew up! New doomer “Gobbler of Dregs” too. The crowd responded furiously in the aborted way they could; given the fixed seating in general admission. Ending the show with a bow, and some kind words from drummer Brandon Dailor, a balanced show delivered. Well, what could follow that but headliner Opeth. Expectations set high. After the stellar mix and energy of the previous, this was a let down in stage presence and energy. It sounded muffled – as if some of the mix groups were muted... taking out the volume levels and dynamics on the soundboard. It didn’t match Mastodon’s epic

mix whatsoever. It should have been twice as loud! It was so glaring it made hits like “Ghost of Perdition” unenjoyable to listen to, with their missed potential. Maybe it was the mysterious recent loss of long-time drummer Martin Axenrot, but the highly regarded band felt lifeless onstage. During the back quarter of the set, someone must have body-checked the soundguy, and during “Deliverance” it all came back, and we caught a few minutes of absolute glory. Yet the damage was already done, first time listeners of the band may have wrote them off.

- Erik Lindholm

Archspire
Entheos
Inferi
Vulvodynia
May 12, Dickens Pub, Calgary AB

It was Juno season during the final leg of Archspire’s Tech Trek V tour, being that their Bleed the Future album was nominated for best hard rock/metal album of the year at the Canadian music awards show (which they then won). Many of the dates, including this show, sold out - which means that Archspire have graduated beyond being a club band and should probably book bigger venues for Tech Trek VI. This Tech Trek consisted of three like-minded names who may not equal the speed of Archspire, but did equal the brutal factor.

Bob the Butcher finally arrived in Calgary with Vulvodynia. The meme is known throughout the brutal death and slam community - but does the band deliver? Yes, though their tendency to bring the street-wise slam riffs did make them the odd band out tonight - still, they were winning over undecided audience members and converting them to Bob worshippers by the dozen.

Nashville, Tennessee’s Inferi are no strangers to playing on big tech/death tours, previously supporting bands such as Obscura, Black Crown Initiate and even Archspire on a previous Trek. They are learning from the masters and are making every appearance as memorable as they possibly can in the process. On this trek they supported their latest, *Vile Genesis* and made certain all hell broke loose once again before they left the stage.

Riding the hype wave from signing to Metal Blade Records, Enthéos, as direct support to Archspire, felt like they had the most to prove. Prove it they did - as a progressive metal supergroup, their set consisted of the best elements of all the bands on the tour - speed, technicality, brutality and even some good songwriting, which justified their position and then some. Vocalist Chaney Crabb let us know that new songs were being tried out, and they were met with nonstop violence in the dense mosh pit formed by the sold out audience.

When Archspire first played Alberta in 2010, only one person was watching their set. After they finished playing, the lone moshers came up to the band and praised their set, and then asked the band to buy him a drink. This goes to show that hard work, word of mouth and perhaps Juno nominations pay off, as Archspire are not only selling out shows in their homeland, but worldwide as well. With their headlining tour, the people received a special serving of an Arch deluxe and even during soundcheck, the sound of 400bpm drums had people pre-ejaculating. The band is known for playing fast - real fast, and many of the audience were prepared to simply stand and observe just how the hell they pull off what they do on their albums in a live setting. Archspire wanted action, though, and as the band got into a groove and the people got over their initial shock and awe, vocalist Oli Peters suggested the crowd to run, “We play fast, so you go fast, too.” Abandoning the linear in both song structure and crowd interactivity, Archspire also had the audience split down the middle and instead of a wall of death, the first side to lift up a member to kiss the hanging disco ball in Dickens would win a prize.

After a rather short but mind-boggling set, the final APPLAUSE sign was raised and the band left the stage to make the final two shows before coming home. Juno award winners or not, Archspire are technical death metal of the highest quality and represent Canada well as masters of the genre.

-Ryan Dyer

Cradle of Filth
Frayle
Whorriify
May 29. 2022
The Palace, Calgary AB

Existence is Futile. Yet we continue to carry on and to attend concerts by a band that no one could really argue their legendary status on now - Cradle of Filth. Thirteen albums in and the band which was hailed as the most successful British band since Iron Maiden has almost tied their output of 17. With each Cradle release, new songs are put into the live set list and a few member changes are bound to happen. Regardless of who is in the band and what songs they play - the Cradle will rock. Dani’s vision of the band remains intact and you won’t leave a Cradle concert feeling underwhelmed.

Local grinders Whorriify were the first band to perform, and with Misfire having to cancel a few dates due to COVID, Whorriify were elevated to being a band that may have been lost in the shuffle due to four bands playing, to a band everyone who arrived early will remember. Although they had only played a handful of shows prior, Whorriify’s position on this bill is earned and I’ll give the reasons as I see them: 1. They have personalities/ the band has a discernible identity. 2. They engage their audience in various ways on social media/they do a lot of self promotion/ this leads to earned promotion with reviews like this. 3. They have brutal songs that get the pit going which are catchy enough to not be just a bunch of noise, making for memorable live shows which have a lot of crowd engagement.

Anyways, they rocked this opening set, giving their all on the big Palace stage.

The wildcard of this tour consists of Cleveland, Ohio’s Frayle. Their doomy, witchy sound has cultivated a small cult following since their conjuring in 2017 and I could see the band, after a few more years and a few more successful tours, becoming something of a sensation akin to Ghost. Once they took the stage, it was easy to get caught up in their spell, with the band displaying an original sound that is like Portishead jamming with Black Sabbath - a highlight being their cover of “Ring of Fire” which is as original and refreshing as Cash taking on “Hurt.” The only downside to this appearance was the volume of vocalist Gwyn Strang’s microphone was a little low in the mix, which made her voice sound a bit buried under the instruments as compared to the studio recordings. Still, they strained to hear her between-song banter and were mesmerized by the performance either way.

At last, the heaven’s mutant children were then ready to take the stage. The one, the only Cradle of Filth. Coming off their appearances with Danzig, the band’s headlining run in support of *Existence is Futile* is one worthy of a band with 30 years of history -90 minutes long, with basically every album released represented in the set list - a reminder that Cradle of Filth was probably the band responsible for: getting you into black metal at age 13, getting you suspended for wearing their Jesus is a Cunt shirt in middle school, getting you that date with the goth chick in school because she noticed you were wearing that very shirt and getting you into other worthy bands due to their touring with Cradle of Filth. What should be mentioned is Dani Filth’s mastery of his domain - the aesthetic, sound and legacy of Cradle of Filth wouldn’t be what it is without his vision, lyrics and most importantly, his voice, which is really one of the most unique in metal. To witness him pulling off the shrieks he does nightly, month after month, year after year is something remarkable. The songs selected for this tour would please anyone looking for deeper cuts and the newer songs were sprinkled throughout as to not seem overbearing; it was easy to tell that some, like “Necromantic Fantasies” will become mainstays over time. “I am the Thorn” sounded jacked, “Nymphetamine” being a fan-favorite, provoked most of the phones to come out to record and “Her Ghost in the Fog” took its place as the closer - it being the song that introduced many of the audience to the spellbinding darkness that is COF for the first time, thus no other position in the set would do.

-Ryan Dyer

Absolute Album Reviews

Toxik - World Circus/Think This Dissonance Productions

It's extraordinary to see just how good so many of the 80s thrash metal bands were. And indeed, still are, in many cases. Thrash will never die!

Hailing from New York, Toxik set out to thrash the world in 1985. Amazingly, the band was originally called Tokyo, which is very 80s! In 1987, Toxik signed to Roadrunner Records, home of a great deal of quality metal in this period. As is evidenced with Dissonance Productions excellent value two CD reissue of *World Circus* and *Think This*. Toxik released their debut *World Circus* in 1987. It's an impressive debut, what we would now call 'Progression Thrash' or 'Progressive Metal' Follow up, *Think This* is even better, really Toxik were ahead of their time. I like the Led Zeppelin cover too!

Like so many bands, Toxik broke up in the late 90s (not the best time for thrash metal), but happily, have reformed, and on the strength of this collection, they're a band with a lot still to offer!

-Steve Earles

Carnivore - Carnivore Dissonance Productions

The death of Pete Steele left a big gap in the metal scene. A true one off, a creator of controversy , a maker of music that was sometimes harsh and often beautiful. A Lord of Misrule. Never boring, I often wonder what great music we've lost with the death of his mighty talent.

You know Pete was a blue collar guy, working for the City, doing the jobs many people wouldn't do, and yet, he achieved great things, an inspiration.

And this is really where it all began, with Carnivore. Pete's tongue-in-cheek lyrics were deliberately designed to provoke, as he said himself. And people are entitled to be offended, we're lucky enough to live in a democracy, so that's their right.

But I say this. Looking at the horrors committed on the poor people of Ukraine by the Russians, on Uighur Muslims by the Chinese, by the Taliban on the Yazidis...the list is sadly long, and all countries have their own hidden horrors. We have overpopulation, climate change, inflation, illness, poverty. These are the things that upset and anger me. Surely these are the things we should be rightly offended about, and do something about, not words?

So, to the music on *Carnivore*. I've read nonsense over the years of Carnivore being influenced by the likes of Judas Priest. This is ridiculous and lazy journalism. There's no doubt that Carnivore were influenced by Black Sabbath, Type O Negative would later cover Black Sabbath, but there's also a working class element here. Sabbath's music came from poverty, neglect, loneliness, the inner city decay, so does Carnivore's, there's no room for hippy dippy snowflake music when you're poor. There's also the punk influence, how could it be otherwise? But, that comes from the same place of poverty as Sabbath's music.

Mostly I think it was a combination of their own sound and also, the fact that they were a three-piece. Listen to Amebix, Celtic Frost, Hellhammer, Bathory and Venom. Different sounding bands for sure, but all making music at the same time as Carnivore. Not influenced by each other (often very apart in space and time) but delving into the same primordial primitive fury and darkness. This re-issue is further enhanced with the band's 1986 demo as bonus tracks.

Overall, a true cult album, you can like it or loathe it. But you won't ignore it.

-Steve Earles

Atrophy - Socialized Hate/Violent By Nature Dissonance Productions

Atrophy were, in my opinion, criminally overlooked in the original wave of thrash (but there were just so many great bands, many only being rightly rediscovered now). They were easily equal musically to the likes of Sacred Reich and Forbidden for instance. They also had, like so many bands of that era, a strong identity.

This well-deserved collection from Dissonance Records features both of Atrophy's Roadrunner Records albums, *Socialised Hate* and *Violent By Nature*. Both have stood the test of time well.

Socialised Hate, originally released in 1988, is excellent, its songs well honed both live and in the studio. Debut albums often benefit from this. There is, as was often the way then, the fun thrash song, in this case 'Beer Bong'. But hey, why not? Bit of fun never hurt anyone. Overall though, the songs and lyrics are very reality-based. Bill Metoyer's production suits the band well.

Two years later, *Violent By Nature* was released. It marked a great progression in both playing and song-writing. However, following the tour for this record, and the departure of guitarist Chris, the band called it a day. Happily, however, Atrophy has reformed with a new line up, and are planning a third album.

On the evidence of their first two records, it should be well worth checking out.

-Steve Earles

Quartz - On The Edge Of No Tomorrow Cherry Red Records

Heavy Metal is all about the triumph of belief over adversary, and nowhere is this more evident than in the new album, *On The Edge Of No Tomorrow*, from New Wave Of British Heavy Metal legends, Quartz.

There is a big Black Sabbath connection with Quartz. Their debut album was produced by Tony Iommi, and has become something of a cult record in its own right. Quartz founding member, Geoff Nicholls, would go on to play keyboards for Black Sabbath for many years, and indeed, seems to have been a close companion of Tony Iommi.

Geoff sadly died in 2017, but his band mates in Quartz have made every effort to include as much of the music he wrote before his death as possible on this album, His heartfelt tribute to the much missed Ronnie James Dio, 'Master of the Rainbow', for instance, is excellent. Another former Sabbath member, Tony Martin, also guests on the album. All this is lovely, and in the spirit of metal, but it's the music that counts, and that is excellent. An outstanding album of sincere heartfelt metal, those who love Dio/Martin era Black Sabbath will find much to love here.

-Steve Earles

Jade Warrior - Released Cherry Red Records

Jade Warrior are a Lee Dorrian band, and I mean that as the highest compliment. They are the kind of band I can see Lee enthusing about in his Classic Rock column. Signed to the legendary Vertigo Records in the early 1970s, home of the legendary Black Sabbath (and not to forget Status Quo, who released some very heavy records in this period, there was something in the water. It was the primordial soup of proto-metal).

I'd describe Jade Warriors music as Jazzy, proggy, proto-metal, but that doesn't even begin to do their wild out-there sounds justice. There's the most pleasing fuzzed out guitar tones on tacks such as the

splendidly named 'Three Horned Dragon King' (seriously great title!), but there is also a pleasing amount of flute playing bringing to mind contemporary band Jethro Tull (Tull mainman Ian Anderson, is Andrew Lincoln's father-in-law, Andy played Rick Grimes in *The Walking Dead*. How cool is that?).

Best of all, there's some mad saxophone bringing to mind the awesome Lemmy-era Hawkwind.

A wonderful and timeless album, with the most special sound, it's like an aural time machine to a better place, and boy, do we need that right now.

- Steve Earles

Xentrix - For Whose Advantage/ Kin Cherry Red Records

The UK Thrash Metal scene is often unfairly overlooked, but a look at Ian Glasper's fine book *Contract In Blood: A History of UK Thrash*, will in the words of Charles Gray's Morcata [a character based on Aleister Crowley] in Hammer's classic adaptation of Dennis Wheatley's *The Devil Rides Out*, prove 'that is not the case'.

The UK thrash scene featured such excellent bands as Sabbath (truly one of the greatest and most original metal bands ever, in some alternative universe they are Metallica big!), Onslaught and of course Sacrilege, a fabulous band, and one I dearly hope will record new music soon.

And then there is Xentrix, a band that could easily give the likes of Testament a run for their money. Make no mistake, Xentrix are a truly terrific thrash band (try saying that after several Guinness!).

This is proven by this pair of excellent reissues. *For Whose Advantage* was originally released in 1990 and builds well on their debut. Song-writing and playing had improved all round. This reissue includes their *Dilute To Taste* EP which includes a live version of their popular cover of the *Ghostbusters* theme (bit of craic!)

Kin was released two years later and caused some controversy at the time as it was seen as trying to emulate Metallica's *Black* album.

I don't feel that was fair. It's a fine album, I feel that they needed to do something different, and the more straightforward approach serves the excellent songs well. It's worth getting this re-release for the bonus features alone which include a cover of the Teardrop Explodes 'Reward', and demos for a fourth Roadrunner album that never happened.

Overall, a criminally underrated band finally shown the respect they deserve.

- Steve Earles

Prowler - Reactivate Cherry Red Records

You can't keep a good band down! As we say in Ireland, 'what's yours won't pass you by'. *Reactivate* is the first ever full time release from New Wave of British Heavy Metal band Prowler (which in itself is a great NWOBHM band name). Incidentally, it was legendary writer Geoff Barton writing for the equally legendary *Sounds* magazine that came up with that clunky title to give a name to a movement that included the now also legendary Diamond Head, Iron Maiden, Saxon, Venom and Angel Witch! Now, it would be dishonest of me to describe Prowler as being in the same category as the aforementioned bands, but they are, in fact, a damn fine band and if the fates had been kinder might be better known today. So, kudos to Cherry Red for getting their music out to a wider audience, but Prowler deserves a hearing!

The stand-out track on *Reactivate* is 'Gotta Get Back To You', which featured on the legendary *Brute Force* compilation. This track is on a par with any of the classic songs of

the time from Angel Witch, Saxon, Maiden or Diamond Head. The rest of *Activate* is an interesting collection of studio and live tracks, all with their own charm and appeal.

Prowler were never lucky, they nearly signed with Bronze Records (home of Motorhead) but this fell through and the band disbanded in 1982. But *Reactivate* remains a glowing testament of one of the NWOBHM's great 'what ifs', and *Reactivate* is a great edition to any NWOBHM fan's collection.

- Steve Earles

Suzi Quatro - The Albums (1980-1986) Cherry Red Records

Suzi Quatro was deservedly a huge star in the 70s. The 80s would not prove to be as successful for Suzi Q, yet she persevered and produced some great music in the process.

1980's *Rock Hard* is easily up their with Suzi's classic 70s albums, and it is worth purchasing this box set for this album alone. It features a great line-up of her band with real chemistry. Her husband guitarist Len Tucky proves himself the perfect foil for his wife, and is a truly great guitarist, always serving the song. The bonus track 'Warm Leatherette' is interesting, very new wave, and had it been released at the time it could have opened up a whole new audience for Suzi.

1982's *Main Attraction* features some contemporary influences, such as on the excellent track 'Remote Control'. Overall a good album, and one that shows a pleasing willingness to experiment on Suzi's part.

Due to various reasons, not least of all Suzi and Len starting a family, Suzi's next album was released in 1986 (a long time between albums in those days). While still a decent album, *Unreleased Emotion* is very mature by comparison to Suzi's glam rock days, which in fairness, like all good artists, simply was an honest reflection of where she was at the time. There's a fun version of 'Wild Thing' with Reg Presley of the Troggs as one of the bonus tracks.

Overall, this box set is an excellent and honest overview of where Suzi was in the 80s, and I'm happy to report the great lady is still producing great music to this very day. She really is made of Detroit Steel!

-Steve Earles

Dayglo Abortions - Hate Speech Unrest

One fish. Two fish. Dayglo fish. Blue fish. The Dr. Seuss characters sit in class while a teacher, sporting Mountie sleeves and a TV with test pattern bars on it for a head rambles on with their incoherent, hateful rhetoric. Oh innocent characters, the places you'll go! Hate Speech, The Dayglo Abortions' 10th album and first in six years, sees the band commenting on a host of problems plaguing our modern society, many of which could be seen as "first world," so get in your seat like one of the characters on the cover and get ready for your lecture.

"White People" starts the album off righteously, being a suitably fast-paced song introducing some of the themes on Hate Speech - this track in particular containing the chorus, "Here's those white people - feeling sorry for themselves." In the album's centerpiece, the longest song on the album and more laid back "Sacks of Meat" speaks of our disillusionment with some of the irksome realities that exist to us, the simple sacks of meat who reside on this earth. "World of Hate" addresses the idea of hate seen in the album title, "Where is the love in this world of hate?" Cretin desperately asks after the verses state that people will really find anything and everything to hate.

While these songs do lead to some deep thinking, there are also tracks like "Sociopath" and "What's for Breakfast" which contain blatant irreverent humor as related to serious issues that the Dayglos have been known for, "If you give me my heroin, I'll eat the poo right out of your bum," Cretin sings on the latter.

The album ends with "Calling All People," a sort of rally cry. "We can

unite and put our guns down. Raise our arms in peaceful celebration.

The globalists will all go into hiding. And their banks we will all soon be looting." People of the world - the message is here! Turn on Hate Speech and get filled with love!

-Ryan Dyer

Dayglo Abortions - Hate Speech Unrest

Growing up in the Garden City meant being a part of the Dayglos... they helped bands, made people feel welcome, gave people drugs, and had endless amounts of parents hunting them down for endless reasons... and it hasn't stopped. Here we are in 2022, and these guys have put out their first true Crossover LP. Don't get me wrong, this is classic Dayglos with classic Cretin Input, but you can tell these guys play with bands like Napalm Death, Dwarves, Brujeria, D.R.I., and also continue to support younger punk acts. Matt Scum brings a great new "Scum" element to the band and Blind Marc sounds like he can see on this recording. There's elements of Stoner/ Doom, D-Beat, Hardcore and Thrash that all take part in one big Party! The new Dayglo Abortions song KILL KILL KILL is a contender for any Hellfest stage. SACKS OF MEAT is pure Sabbath, and WORLD OF HATE is Classic Dayglos. The track WHAT'S FOR BREAKFAST is the most punk thing I have heard in 20 years. These guys have no way of stopping... not a chance. SOCIOPATH is my favourite track on this album. Easily their most Metal and Loud LP... nothing wrong with that. ARGH FUCK KILL! 8.5 out of 10

-Dustin Jak



Absolute Film Reviews

Firestarter
Universal Pictures

Spoiler Alert

The remake of Stephen King's *Firestarter* is not entirely a dud. It's running on fumes, as interest for reboots from this author's catalogue of works has become nonexistent. Plus, I feel the enthusiasm to create a shared universe is no longer the plan.

Too much time has passed to put together films to carry the torch, and not everyone remembers the version featuring the young Drew Barrymore. It was a blip in a decade where every studio wanted to adapt one of this author's works. The replacement in this update, Ryan Kiera Armstrong, can hold her own. Her naïve portrayal is enough to suggest Charlie, a young girl with pyrokinetic abilities, isn't fully aware of what she's capable of doing and much like the story, when she comes of age, to become that phoenix of yore that can spell doom for the rest of humanity feels predestined. However, her parents, Vicky (Sydney Lemmon) and Andy (Zac Efron) are. They are fighting over how to raise her and what to do after escaping the Gulag. Technically, this place is called The Shop, a place to train psychically gifted individuals to do their bidding. What their goals are is clear, but it doesn't have the same feels as in what King's novel revealed.

What I read between the lines is that she's a Black Widow in training. There's a subplot which hints at that idea, and another psionically gifted individual, Rainbird (Michael Greyeyes), is the result. He's tasked to hunt them down, and he is everything the parents fear their little girl can become. And anyone who read the novel knows the father gave the okay to unleash her powers. She's asked to burn The Shop down, and as for which version feels more explosive, that's the only part of the 80s film I vividly remember. Those moments from Mark Lester's film makes this update look like a firework explosion rather than a nuke going off. She's told to burn The Shop down, and as for which version feels more explosive, that's the only part of the 80s film I vividly remember. Those moments from Mark Lester's film makes this update look like a firework explosion rather than a nuke going off.

After this work, *IT* (Chapters 1 & 2), and *Doctor Sleep*, fans would think references to one another would begin. *The Dark Tower* didn't do its job like the novels, and as for what's next, it's unlikely *Salem's Lot* will offer anything to bring this universe together.

— Ed Sum



The Sadness

In reading a lot of *Crossed* before watching *The Sadness*, I was prepared for the possibility that anything and everything foul would be depicted on screen in this feature. *The Sadness*, after all, does share some similarities with Garth Ennis' comic, most notably the plot aspect of the antagonists being infected with a virus which turns them into masochistic fiends with a taste for sexual torture.

Limitless depravity is something unseen in typical horror films - zombies eat people, the rabid infected individuals from *28 Days Later* are highly aggressive, but these movie monsters have limits - you know when going into these movies you're going to see some flesh getting eaten and maybe an intestine ripped out, though the drive and motivation of these fiends isn't as wicked and nefarious as it could be, and leaves these films as feeling rather predictable.

In *The Sadness*, like *Crossed*, the fiends, infected by the Alvin virus, are driven to commit the most depraved acts imaginable, and the anticipation of what they might do and to whom is what keeps the film at a perpetual peak of excitable dread.

Past films have pushed the limits of onscreen violence, and *The Sadness* sometimes brings moments of nostalgia - while watching I was reminded of seeing the fire extinguisher scene in *Irreversible* for the first time, the eye-fucking scene in *A Serbian Film* or even watching Cronenberg's *The Fly* when an infected fiend vomits on the leg wound of a victim. Perhaps the infected also had memories of seeing these films and acted out these fantasies, consciously or not.

Salo, *Cannibal Holocaust* or *Men Behind the Sun* also had a bit of commentary on politics or society, and with *The Sadness*, the government dealing with the pandemic is analyzed, with some eerie similarities to our real life situation such as a doctor in the film not being listened to by the government when he tries to warn them of the virus and the same type of ordeal involving doctors in China attempting to warn the people about COVID-19. Because of that, we have been living in our own Sadness.

-Ryan Dyer



Calgary Underground Film Festival Top 10 Picks

By Ryan Dyer

Seeing a film festival is often a choose your own adventure of films. Sometimes two that you want to see are playing at the same time. Sometimes one is playing too early. Sometimes, you're at work or other shit is going on and you can't catch that particular film. Luckily, CUFF made their film schedule rather flexible, having screenings on multiple days and online after in-person screenings were complete.

Here are 10 that we managed to catch. See you next year!



The Righteous

The Righteous was filmed in Newfoundland, though don't expect to hear Newfie accents. It involves a former priest confronting a sin from his past in the flesh, and how he must make a choice on how to deal with it. Matter-of-fact in its delivery and delivering on its promises makes *The Righteous* recommended for spiritual horror fans.



Dual

When it comes to films about people confronting their doubles, *Dual* will go down as one of the best. This dry-as-fuck black comedy by Riley Stearns is about how in the near future we are given the opportunity to make clones of ourselves when we know we will die, and what happens when



that doesn't go right.

Watcher

Who watches the watcher? Following in the footsteps of John Carpenter's *Someone's Watching Me*, *Watcher* is a paranoia-filled, giallo styled thriller that shows that maybe if you think someone's watching you, no, you're not crazy, so take precaution or you may end up with a knife to your throat.

Freakscene - The Story of Dinosaur Jr

I admit that I've never really understood the music of Dinosaur Jr, though they do play very, very loud and aside from My Bloody Valentine, are the most dangerously loud band I've seen live. Valentine also make an appearance in this documentary, along with Henry Rollins, Sonic Youth and others, which does explain the timeline of Dinosaur Jr, which is fascinating even if it doesn't try to analyse their music.



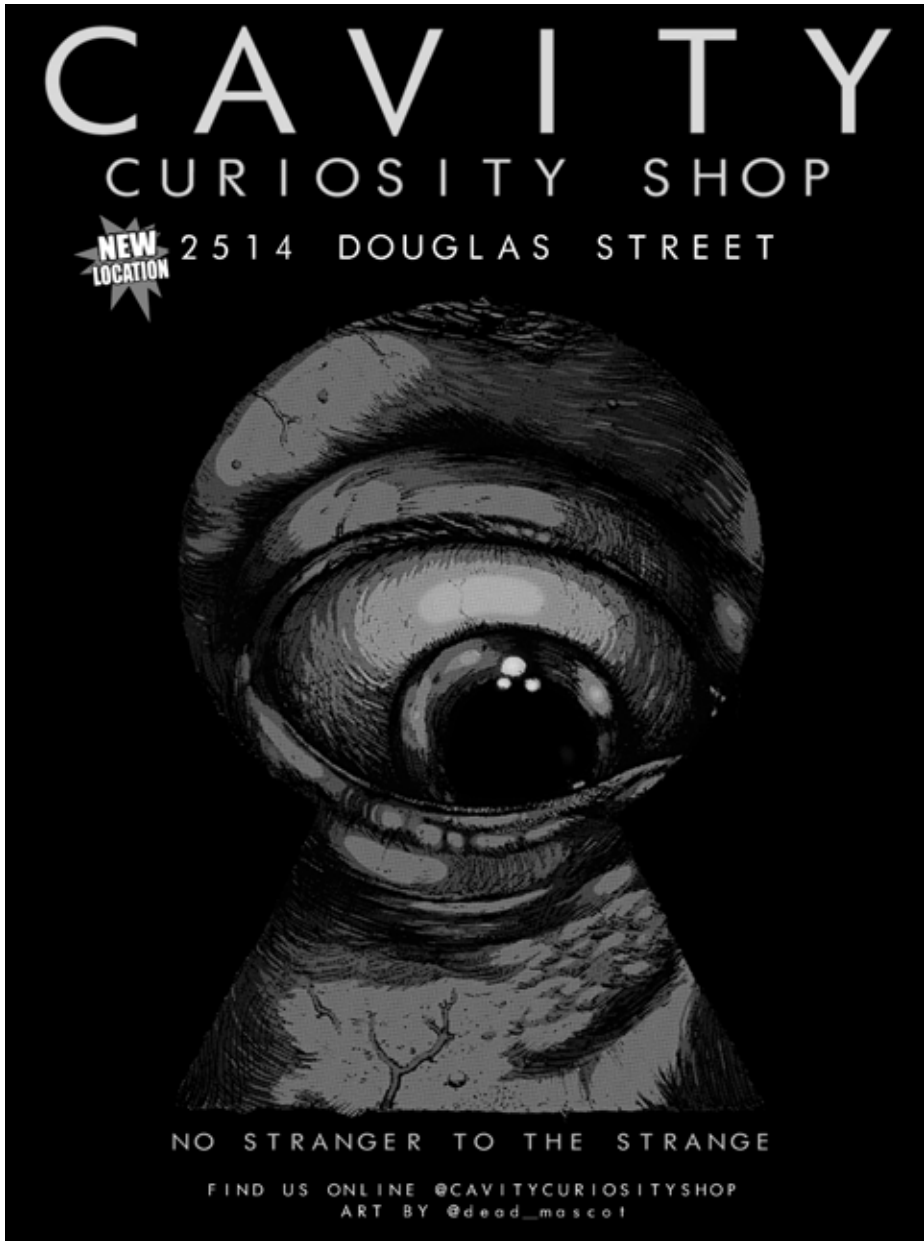
Luzifer

"Where's the devil?" *Luzifer* follows a mother and child living a Buddhist lifestyle in the mountains. Her, the firm leader and he, the *Of Mice and Men* style, simple minded giant. The devil comes in the form of drones. Drones controlled by men who want to demolish their home to make way for a ski resort. Well, that is the plot but the main thing to experience with *Luzifer* is the style, which is much like Tarkovsky's at times, bringing to mind some of the shots in *Stalker*. This is one you won't soon forget.



Wild Men

Fuck my life, I'm going



into the woods to live like a Viking. *Wild Men* brings the laughs with a premise that is kind of *Into the Wild* turned into a black, buddy comedy, with Martin choosing to dress from head to toe in furs and set off into the Scandinavian forest. Luckily, he meets up with an unlikely chum so he doesn't have to bear the cold alone, who can hopefully rattle him out of his midlife crisis and get back home to a warm bed with his wife.

What Josiah Saw

This gothic thriller channeled the grimmest facets of Stephen King's bleakest tales set far from the city lights with the skies being all dark and no stars. The gypsies will remind you of *Thinner* and a murder at a farm house will bring to mind *1922* - though *What Josiah Saw* has enough originality to stand on its own, due in part by the bleak cinematography, score and of course actors. Robert Patrick shows he has many villainous layers to unpeel yet and Nick Stahl shows he plays a sketchy burnout better than anyone.

Piggy

Upon watching the trailer for the new Spanish thriller *Piggy*, it is easy to assume that it will be a basic revenge flick - the bullies call the girl fat, she snaps, and then heads will roll. *Piggy* denies this easy route for something a bit more realistic, at least when looking at the protagonist, Sara. She isn't a bloodthirsty villain, despite her being covered in it on the poster - in turn, the fate of those who bullied her is in her hands. This one will leave you with a lot to chew on.



Night Bus

Night Bus screened as part of the Hideous Haunts horror shorts package at CUFF this year. Despite directors for other shorts being in attendance,

after *Night Bus* screened, this is the short that simply couldn't leave my mind after watching it. This Taiwanese entry is a 20-minute animated noir-style tale directed by Joe Hsieh (whose other work strikes a similar tone and shares the same animation style) which tells the story of some ill-fated passengers on a night bus. First, a woman's pearl necklace is stolen and from then on, secrets are revealed and blood is shed. Atmospheric, shocking and unforgettable, Joe Hsieh is a director to look out for after this impressive short.



A Life on the Farm

I caught this on demand after the formal festival ended, and if I had seen it in the cinema, might have vomited during the scenes of cow birth we are shown as part of this documentary on the legendary found footage film *A Life on the Farm*. It is promised that the farmer has something to show us, and he's not kidding - one example of life on this typical farm is holding up the cow's placenta to the camera after the birth. For someone who hasn't seen the original film, the amount of talking heads here ruined the flow a bit - perhaps showing this documentary and the original film it is talking about would benefit the viewer, much like *Troll 2* and *Best Worst Movie*.



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Podium

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

N: Hi! I'm Nick. I play guitar in PÓDIUM as fierce as I can.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who is in the band, and what are you all about?

N: PÓDIUM started as my personal project. Bedroom punk, I think they call it nowadays. Drum machines, small shitty amps, neighbors were complaining, etc. I did it just for fun, but it was good, so I called some friends, and we started the band, which had a much bigger and more aggressive sound. After a couple of formation changes, we are now a four-piece with Carmona on drums boom boom, Salva on bass dubi dubi, África on vocals waaaaaaaaa, and me guitar clang.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

N: Boom boom dubi dubi waaaaaa clang. Haha! We try to get the work done with minor elements, no drum rolls nor solos, and super simple songs played with rage. We love repetition, loud and fast.

AU: Have you released an album recently? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?

N: Yeah, Slovenly Recordings released our LP. They are great people. It was recorded and mixed by ourselves. All playing in the same room simultaneously to get that live feel about it—loud, loud, loud. We like loud—a lot.

AU: Does your latest album explore any particular themes or topics?

N: I guess there is a reflection of daily monotony, mechanical thrust to get you through the day as if we were machines. Lyrics are about simple everyday things that happen emotionally or politically—and spitting it out with fury.

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

N: "Que Arda" is one of my favorites; it's simple and works so well. It's super fun to play. Also, "La Noche," at the end, we go into doom mode, and it feels so powerful.

AU: How have you been surviving the Apocalypse? Any survival tips to share?

N: Yeah. Set a drum kit in your living room. It makes everything easier for you. Maybe not as much for your neighbors, though, haha! I'm joking. Seriously, I think everybody is having a real hard time, which has left a deep mark on us. So it's time to be extra nice to people. The only way to survive is kindness.

AU: What can people expect from your live show?

N: Energy, sweat, pogo, and ringing ears for a week.

AU: Are you stoked for your show in Vancouver on July 8th? Where is the show? What do you like best about playing in Canada?

N: Yeah!!! None of us have ever been to Canada! I don't know much about the country; I expect to be surprised!

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

N: I love linen trousers in the summer. I just discovered that shit. They are so cool and soft. I'm over 40, so I now qualify as a linen trouser wearer.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

N: Esa Peña ah!!!!

<https://podiumpodium.bandcamp.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/podiumvllc/>

Band BW Photo Credit: Miguelito

Live Color Photo Credit: Marti Bech

Black Dog Video

Interview by Ira
"VHS" Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most notorious for?

DG: Hello. My name is Darren Gay and I'm the owner of Black Dog Video.

AU: What was the origin story of Black Dog Video?

DG: I started up Black Dog in the spring of 1996 in response to the lame video stores that populated my neighborhood at the time - Cambie hood. That and I loved movies and needed a job. One that I liked.

AU: Why are video rental stores an important part of local communities in your opinion?

DG: Video Stores are more than just a library of films. They are part of the community, a hub to socialize, talk to others about films and life in general. It's a place that, if you're like me and watch a lot of films, to frequent, get to know the staff and some of the other customers. This helps to build a vibrant community.

AU: What sorts of films did you specialize in?

DG: We specialized in many genres - horror, cult, foreign, documentaries, sci-fi, queer and all sorts of things.

AU: What were some highlights over the years of running the shop? Any celebrity pops-ins, in-store signings, or screenings?

DG: Some celebrity sightings include Kevin Smith (awesome), Matt Dillon (cool), Oliver Stone (aloof and a bit of a knob), Benicio Del Toro (thief! Stole a copy of Hearts of Darkness on VHS - we later got \$100 out of his assistant for it), Aubrey Plaza, Mos Def, Alan Ruck, Udo Kier (smoked a joint with him), Callem Keith Rennie and a few others I'm sure I forgot about.

AU: What are some of your ultimate Staff Picks



of all time?

DG: Some faves include *Bad Boy Bubby*, *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, *Double*

Indemnity, *Withnail and I*, *Blue Velvet*, *Sleepaway Camp*, *The Room*, *The Kingdom* (Von Trier) plus so many others I can't remember.

AU: Why is physical media superior to streaming in your opinion?

DG: It's permanent. Streaming stuff comes and goes and the selection on streaming is dire at best. With physical media, you actually own the work. It's yours forever. And the quality is superior. And you get all the special features if you're into that kind of thing. There's no contest.

AU: What's the reason you have decided to shut down Black Dog Video?

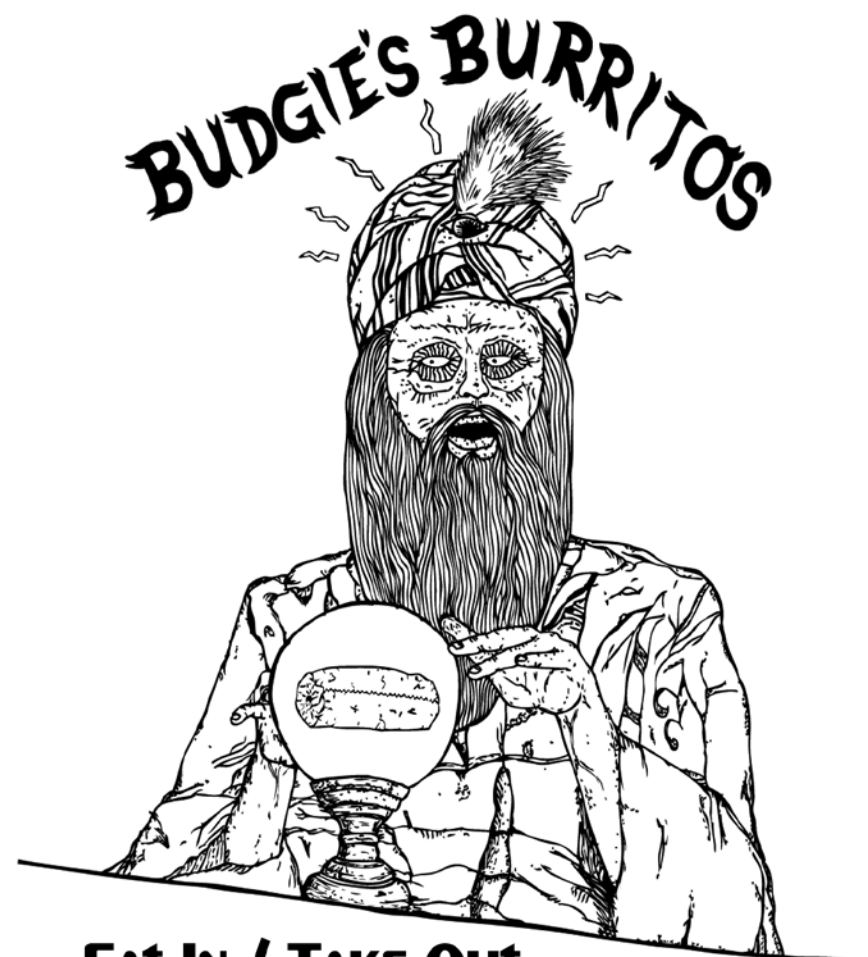
DG: The convenience of mediocrity that is streaming has done us in. That and Covid. And the cost of doing business has constantly gone up while revenues have been on the decline for years. Simple economics I guess.

AU: Is there hope that something will be resurrected in the future?

DG: Not from me. I've done this for over 26 years and while I still love it, it's time to hang up the movie gloves.

AU: Final words for our readers.

DG: I hope that with our closing (and the other fine shops that are no more) folks will see the importance of what we do in keeping the history and culture of film alive. Without us, we are going to lose such a vast wealth and knowledge of film. The streaming services are unreliable and insignificant with regards to keeping the rich and diverse history of film alive. So go support your local video store - Video Cat here in Vancouver, Pic-a-Flic in Victoria, The Lobby in Edmonton, Bay Street and Eyesore Cinema in Toronto and all the other fine shops still fighting the good fight!

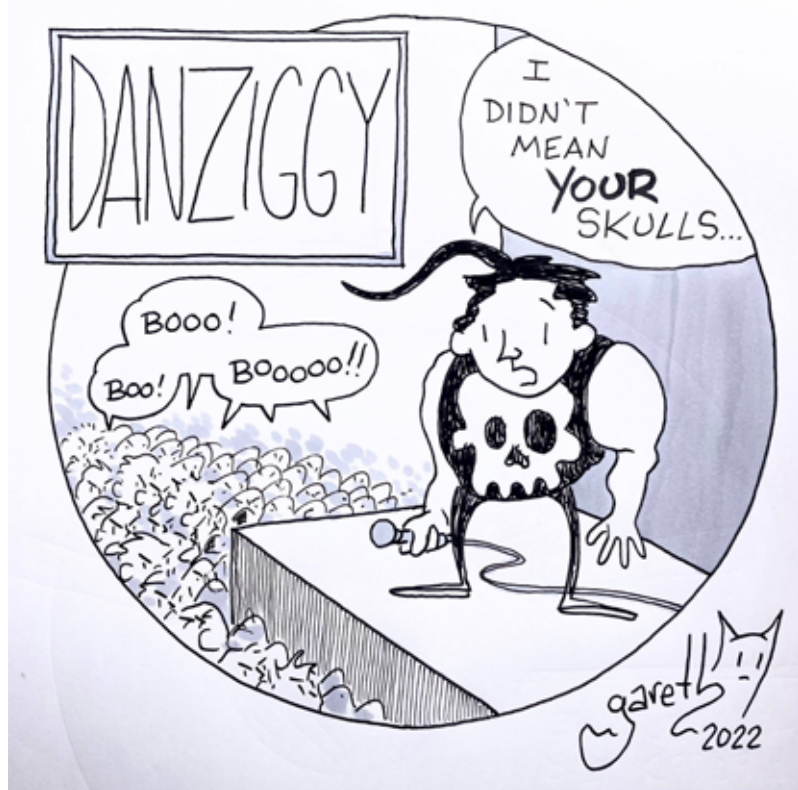


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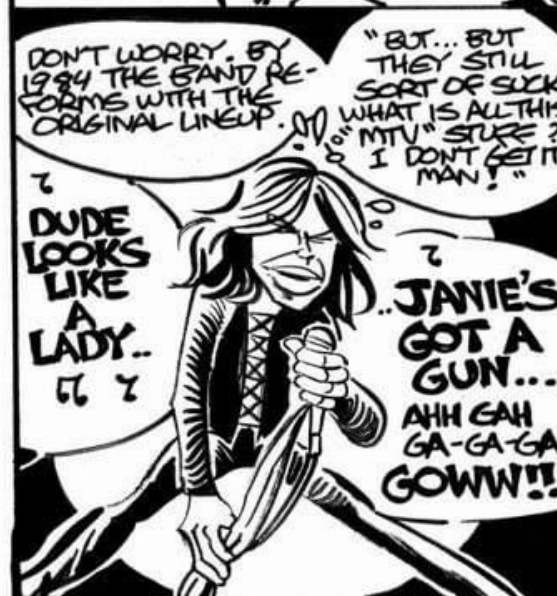


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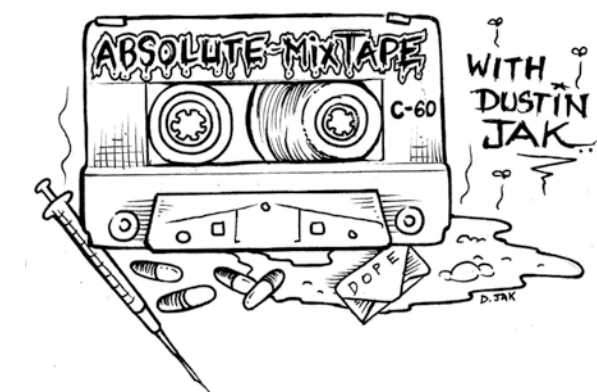
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- 7) Hump - Low Pile Carpet
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- 9) SweatHogz - BC Bud
- 10) A.W.T. - Roy's Dink Shrinks on Coke
- 11) Gnar Gnars - Tongue Punch The Fart Box
- 12) The Pricks - Little Jenny
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- 14) The Shivs - I Hate Junkies
- 15) Staggers - Cock Teased
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- 19) Shovlhed - Great Deceiver
- 20) LummoX - D & D at the

- China Kitchen
- 21) Frostbacks - Stubby
 - 22) Excessives - Enamorato
 - 23) Don Teflon - No Use For You
 - 24) Tim - Stolen Gear
 - 25) Six Sense - Gay Rod
 - 26) Assbackwards - Caine Skank
 - 27) Clusterfux - Keep Me Mellow
 - 28) Goat Boy - Crossing The Border
 - 29) Fuck You Pigs - Black Out
 - 30) R.E.K. - Bite It
 - 31) Mexican Power Authority - Laser Scorpions Karaoke
 - 32) Keg Killers - Fux
 - 33) Micky Christ - User Friendly

To Be Continued Next Issue...

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Elektrik Mistress

AU: Hey Elektrik Mistress, how's it going, welcome back with your new EP "Chapter 99". The first question is what does the title mean?

Kyle: It's going pretty well, thanks. To be honest, I'm actually not sure what it means, as I didn't write the lyrics. But, I can infer that since it has to do with witches and the occult, maybe it's the last page of the particular ritual in question.

Riley: It's just an album title track for our song "Chapter 99".

AU: You have new members in the group, what can ya tell us about them?

Kyle: Our new guitarist is Jason, who is also my twin brother. We've been playing music together our whole lives, so it's pretty much a natural fit. Riffs get picked up pretty quickly with Jason around. Also, with two guitars, we can get into guitar harmonies, which are pretty hard to do with just one guitar.

AU: What can fans expect from this new record compared to your last?

Kyle: I think this one is a little rawer and stripped-down compared to our first EP. Definitely less polished because we did the engineering parts ourselves.

Riley: We have a lot more material to record. I think this latest EP is a good indication of what's to come

regarding how the band's sound is evolving.

AU: What was your learning experience self-recording this EP?

Riley: I think we learned a lot about the recording process in general. How to best manage multiple band members simultaneously working on a single project file, how to keep things light but efficient while running the recording rig, and capturing a performance. It took a few iterations to

define our process. I'm looking forward to fewer hiccups in our future recording endeavors. **AU:** We loved your music video for the EP's title track, how did you get the idea to use clips from the 1920s film Haxan?

Riley: Kyle had the idea to search for public domain content we could use for a video. We collectively agreed that Haxan looked interesting and decided to use it.

Kyle: I saw a YouTube comment on the video saying "this is like the hundredth video to use Haxan". This is true, and I guarantee you it won't be the last, heh.

AU: How's the Halifax and Maritime scene? Can we expect Elektrik Mistress touring this Summer or Fall?

Kyle: It's coming around again. What with restrictions being lifted, more and more people want to see live music again.

Riley: There's definitely a presence in Halifax. I think the biggest challenge is venues. There's only a handful of places to house the independent scene. We don't have a tour on the books but we're looking forward to playing live more.

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**Interview by Ryan "Master Blaster" Dyer and
Ira "Feral Kid" Hunter**

TANK: You are talking to Jim “The TANK” Dorsey, aka The Lord Humungus (which is what I am most notorious for). To many (mostly Misfits fans) I am known as Jonathan M. Grimm (John Grimm for short). That was to be my pro wrestling name when I tried out for the WCW in 1995. Obviously, that never panned out, but I was working for the Misfits at that time and the name kinda stuck. TANK is a nickname that I was given around that same time by the Misfits and that one has definitely stuck as that is what most people call me, even my wife and my own mother. But The Lord Humungus ends up being who most people know me as though, as I recreate this character for various Mad Max related events around the world, from leading the Dogs of War at Wasteland Weekend, to DJing, to conducting official wedding ceremonies, to appearing in various short films and documentaries.

TANK: I first heard about the Mad Max world when my dad bought me an issue of Starlog magazine that featured a sneak preview of "Revenge of the Jedi". There was a myriad of other great movies of the time being featured in that issue, one of which was The Road Warrior. As a

with my friends, I dove and made a forward roll and jumped up onto my feet. My buddies were like, "What are you doing?" I simply replied, "I'm a Road Warrior!" The rest is history...

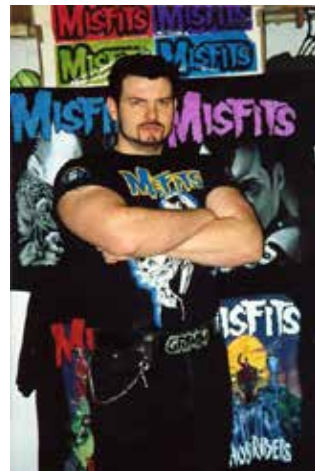
TANK: I began lifting weights as soon as I turned 18. I was a huge fan of the former Misfits front man, Glenn Danzig, and in his new band, Danzig, he had gotten quite buff. So, I joined a gym and endeavoured to get into similar shape.

TANK: I started coming up to New Jersey in 1994 to audition for the Misfits as their new singer.



TANK: Jerry asked me to come up and try out to be the new singer. I'm much more suited to sing for Type O Negative or a band like that as I have a very deep voice, but I really hit it off with Jerry, Doyle and their middle brother Rocky. I worked with them building props, painting models and helping out at appearances. When they got back on tour in '96 I sold the merchandise at the shows and was pretty much Rocky's right hand man. He was the tour manager so in an unofficial sorta way I was the assistant tour manager. Along

TANK: We were booked to play a show in Mexico City with the Dead Kennedys supporting us. Just like the Misfits, the remaining members of the Dead Kennedys had sued their original singer, Jello Biafra, for back



as I saw Marky Ramone grab a metal pipe with a frenzied look in his eyes, ready to do whatever was needed. I got the bands out the back and into the vans as a sea of bodies was pouring down the street towards us. The vans started to roll away and I was the last one to get in. I had to run with a bass in one hand, a guitar in the other and dive into the passenger seat as the van sped past me trying to get away from the angry mob. We barely made it! We went back hours later after the police had cleared everything out and of course the other guitar was gone but our vintage Arch Fiend backdrop, was still intact. I would have never guessed that would have been the case.

TANK: Officially I was their tour manager, though it said on my business card "TANK - Babysitter for Grown Men".

TANK: I have been to two of the reunion shows, but honestly I was not impressed with either show. I could hear the opening bands really clearly, but when the Misfits came on the sound was just horrible. Their backline was louder than the PA which threw everything off. You could tell they did not rehearse together at all due to all the mistakes that were being made and how many times Glenn would get lost. Glenn was so out of shape that they had to take long breaks between songs, where he would just pant loudly in the mic trying to catch his breath. I don't know what the lighting designer was smoking but they had no idea what they were doing. In between songs they would just go totally dark which was extremely anti-climactic when Jerry would toss his bass way in the air at the end of a song and then they'd go to total blackout and never see it hit the stage and smash. All we got was Glenn's heavy breathing in the dark. Kinda weird. If we had been doing shows like that during my tenure, I would have put a stop to it immediately.

Instagram @TheLordHumungus

To Be Continued Next Issue...

A black and white photograph of a man in a suit and tie, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. He is wearing a dark suit jacket, a white shirt, and a dark tie. The background is dark and out of focus. The image is framed by a thin white border.

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(continued from issue #105 April/May 2022)

AU: The last big show we went to before all this was Black Label Society, Obituary, Lord Dying in Vancouver. Wonder if that would have been the same tour, just you guys didn't make it up here.

GM: No, we missed every single one of our Canada shows man! I was so fucking bummed. We got a bunch of friends up there too, you know. Like with this last thing, I remember we got the COVID test in the morning we were supposed to be heading up there. And I was just like, "oh man, this sucks". The first time around, we just could not

afford the tests. Hahaha the tests were as much as our guarantee! For five of us to get it done.

AU: It's such a hamper on everything for anyone trying to tour.

GM: I look at it like, when we go to Europe, with 14 different countries you go into, an all 14 have different protocols. What happens then? Whatever, I leave that all to the people that make plans, I just play bass.

AU: Yeah, I recently was talking to the band Archspire. They're tech death band out of Vancouver. Getting set to go on tour. And the vocalist Oli, said something like "I just got to let go, we're gonna go to Europe and I don't know how that side will go. But I focus on my singing and that will be that."

GM: Yeah, you got have a faithful optimistic approach to everything now. And shit still might go wrong! Hahaha!

AU: Do you have a way you like to feel connected, or at peace, when you're out on tour? How do you kind of make peace, or feel happier, connected - find balance when you're

out, when you're moving? That could be a good lesson for a lot of young bands that are trying to learn how to tour.

GM: Yeah, it takes your head out of it. I mean, if you think about that, you're driving for six or eight hours a day, in terms of linear time, you make yourself insane. But to me, think about it from another position, think about it like "if I was at home, would I have the time to sit here and read a book, in four days", you know? If you turn it around like that, turn it into it's your time to do stuff that's productive and non-essential as far as what the rest of the world demands out of you.

It makes all of the time of travel disappear dude, because you're absorbed in a book, or you're absorbed in conversation with your friends. Basically on vacation, with your best friends. So turn around and talk about a fucking gig, or whatever dude... Anything! There's a lot to appreciate about being on the road you know, there's a lot to appreciate about being home as well.

I'm not saying I don't like being at home, but when you're there... dude, live it up! Don't half step, have stuff to do, enjoy it. Because some bands don't ever get the fucking tour you know, that's how I look at it. Some bands will get to tour, and play horrible tours, where no one comes to see them.

From the shows that we're playing, to the six or so hours we hang out in the van all day, it's all important. You should take it in and appreciate it, and not look at it like a burden. You got to go somewhere! Because you don't have to go anywhere, you chose to, and you are just lucky to be on tour with a band.

AU: The polar opposite is you're stuck in the movie "Office Space" in a cubicle somewhere. So who wants that?

ABSOLUTE METAL

GM: And it can be that, it can be green rooms and subpar food, and gas station food, and you know, car trouble – whatever – that can be your focus if you want to, but yeah, there's just too much other stuff to pay attention to that makes it enjoyable, and not something that's burdensome.

AU: I'm thinking of you guys being on tour with Black Label Society and your sounds being so different. Did you guys ever crossover, and

jam on stage? Like you're rocking a big bluesy bassline and then Zakk Wylde comes in and plays 500 notes at once?

GM: Hahaha! We did some jazz numbers to ease into our set with, if he came out wheedling away with his whammy bar, I would fucking cry. But unfortunately that didn't happen. We got along so good with them, I don't know why it didn't. No blues jams

with Zakk just yet, hahaha.

AU: Gotta save something for the next Japan world tour eh? Get 'em on round two.

GM: Sure! If any BLS fans want to see us again! Hahaha, nah, it's all good, we made some new fans.

To Be Continued...

- ERIK LINDHOLM

Photo Credit: Albert Licano



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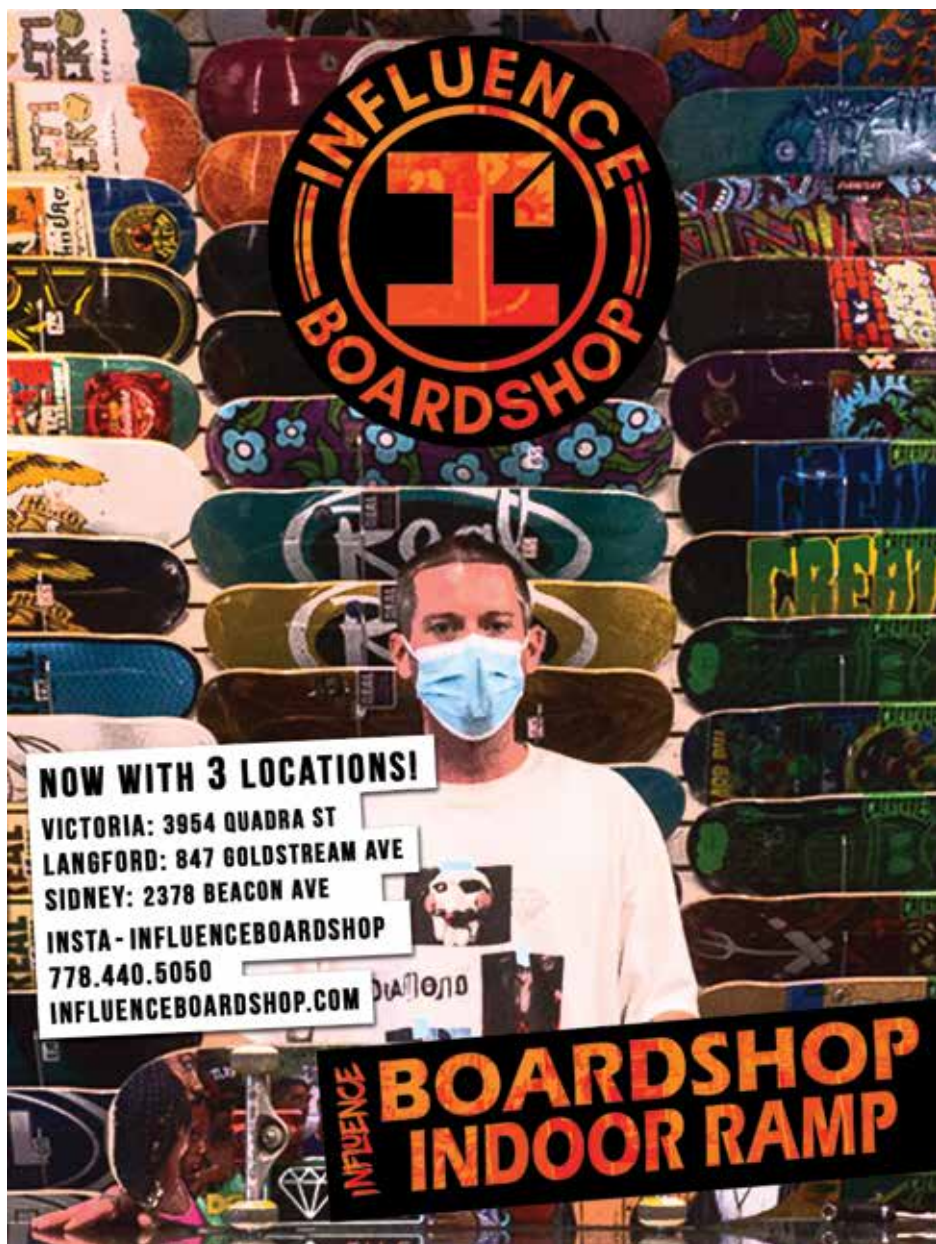
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Kick You in the Head Winnipeg's Nostrils speak of the punk scene, 1979–82

Bruce Hallett, Vocals, guitar
Jim Simm, bass
Bruce Simpson, guitar
Scott Coats, drums

Based on interviews with Bruce Hallett and Jim Simm.

Bruce: I was 22 in the summer of 1979. I hadn't been in any other groups. As a teenager, I wrote upwards of 100 songs, though I stopped doing that in 1975 or so. These were just accompanied by a strummed acoustic guitar. I had no concept of how to play electric rock guitar until I heard the first Ramones album. But I knew chord progressions and relative minors and so forth.

Jim: Both Bruce and I were mesmerized by the Sex Pistols when they came out, so I guess they could be called our first influence. We listened to *Never Mind the Bollocks* continually for about a year, then I reached a breaking point and could no

longer stand hearing it. We also listened to a lot of Velvet Underground and Iggy Pop and some MC5. Our Canadian influences were Vancouver's D.O.A. and the Subhumans. For whatever reason, we never really liked anything Canadian that came from east of Winnipeg.

Jim: We advertised for a drummer at one of the local music shops and Scott Coats came out

for an audition. He was slightly younger than us, good looking, a talented drummer, and best of all was allowed to drive his parents' station wagon to move gear. However, he ditched us after the first audition. If I recall correctly, he said he was more interested in heavy metal. Interestingly, about three months later we met again and I think Scott was slightly more impressed because by that time I was able to play a few songs on the bass and keep the rhythm. Bruce Simpson joined in November 1980.

Bruce: In Winnipeg, there were misfits like us in every neighbourhood, reading about punk music in the magazines, and picking up what records there were to be had downtown. Elvis Costello played Winnipeg on November 11, 1978, and apparently that was a galvanizing point even though he was nothing like punk rock – all the early scene kids were there. Within a couple of months a few bands, including Lowlife, had

formed and were playing punk fest-type shows and the odd hall gig. The Psychiatrists, and a band called Discharge (not the British group), were the other early ones. The best early punk rock band was Lowlife, who issued the three-song "Leaders" EP in 1979. Our major competitor in the early 80s was Le Kille, which later evolved into Personality Crisis.

Bruce: Le Kille formed in mid-1979 and were the first of a second wave of Winnipeg punk bands. The Nostrils and the Wurst (an all-girl group) followed in late 1979, and these three bands would often share a bill during 1980. By that time, Lowlife and Discharge had broken up, and members of each formed a new band called the Understanders. They played a lot of Damned covers, if I recall correctly. I think that the Manic Depressors formed in 1980, and brothers Bill and Kelly Jackson played as the Stretch Marks as a two-piece. By January 1981, Le Kille had morphed into Personality Crisis, and their first show as PC was warming up for us at the Marion. That sounds kind of impressive, except that they blew us off the stage. They had gotten much better very quickly after adding Jimmy Green on guitar, and we were pretty wary of them after that. We usually, although not always, let them headline when we played together that winter and spring. The Wurst had broken up by then, but there was a new all-girl band called the Ruggedy Annes starting up. The old punks were heading off in two directions, with some trending more towards reggae/ska/new wave, and others, like us, that just stuck to punk.

A lot of new hardcore bands were starting out, practising away, and would emerge in droves in 1982. But the Nostrils broke up at the end of 1981. We played a reunion show on September 30, 1982, in the middle slot, at the soon-to-be-demolished Downtown Theatre



and easily dominated the proceedings. (The show – which also featured the Ruggedy Annes, Monuments Galore, Dub Rifles, and Stretch Marks – was filmed. Unfortunately, only 26 minutes of "The Last Movie" are known to exist and appear on *The Last Movie* DVD.)

Jim: When Jason contacted us about releasing some of the recordings from way back then, I admit I was quite interested and excited. We had a good time at our reunion show in 2018. It was good to relive those old days and I hope that some of the younger crowd thinks our music is worth listening to. I have two sons in their early thirties, and both had a wonderful time at the reunion gig with their friends. I think it's fantastic that Supreme Echo is taking an interest in this era of music and putting undiscovered gems on vinyl for the next generation.

Bruce: Naturally, I would rather this EP had come out 40 years earlier, but it's kind of stupid to make plans if you live in Winnipeg.

Nostrils photo: Bev Davies.

Interviews, edits: Jason Flower

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Deadwolff

Interview by Sheldon Byer

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous or infamous for?

DW: You're talking to Tommy and Bobby of Deadwolff. I guess we're famous or infamous for our love of Miller Lite beer.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who is in the band and what are you all about?

DW: Well I had this idea for a band, a sound I wanted to go for, and a bit of an attack plan when it came down to it all, so I began writing a few songs and kinda got all the ducks in a row. Bobby was in between bands at the time and agreed to check out the tunes. He really dug what I was going for and wrote some guitar parts. Slapped some meat on the bones of tunes I had. We realized we worked really well together so we quickly soon got to recording and tour planning

and here we are!

AU: Where did the name come from & why the extra F? You got something to prove?

DW: I thought of it one day driving home one from work. Just seemed like a cool name and the extra "F" sets it apart.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible?

DW: Well we call it "Heavy Rock N' Roll," which seems to suit it well. A mix of punk and metal but mostly it's just Heavy Rock and Roll and we think that's the best way to describe it.

AU: Tell us about your upcoming release? If any.

DW: We recently finished recording our full length album. We're currently in the process of getting all of our ducks in a row when it comes to videos, pressing, etc.



AU: Tell us about the EP & how you've grown since its release.

DW: Well the drumming on the EP was done by Tommy. So with Angus on the drums we now have a third person in the studio. We've also got a bunch of new tracks and our sound is evolving a bit. We're starting to really take on the "Heavy Rock N' Roll" sound and we think people are going to dig it.

AU: Any stand-out tracks you're stoked on?

DW: There's definitely some heavy hitters on the album, but we feel the entire album is aces through and through.

AU: You're about to embark on a Western Canadian Tour. You've already completed an east coast run so you'll be covering almost the entire country. Tell us how it's been so far.

DW: So far it's been one hell of a time. The east coast, Quebec and Ontario have all been great to us. We met a lot of rad bands and people. If the West is anything like the East has been for us then it should be a wicked run.

AU: Tell us why you're stoked to play the Have A Good Laugh Festival in Vancouver?

DW: We have some deep ties within the punk community and a lot of our friends in the punk scene are out that way, so we're super excited to be welcomed onto the fest and stoked to see so many buds.

AU: Have any of you had sex or seen anyone have sex with any cattle bison or buffalo at the Bovine Sex Club?

DW: Not up to this point but you never know!

AU: Where do you guys draw your biggest influence from that directly impacts Deadwolff's sound?

DW: Our sound is pretty much just a

BENEATH THE WHEEL

conglomerate of the genres we listen to, lives we live, and we do our best to make music that represents just that, to the best of our ability.

AU: What can we expect from the upcoming tour?

DW: A lot of heavy rock n' roll and good times.

AU: What's the heavy metal capital for Deadwolff?

DW: There's so many great bands coming out and established all over the place, it's hard to pinpoint one place. But for us, it's wherever fans want us to play.

AU: Best new bands you've been able to play with or have caught in recent memory. Ones our readers may not know about?

DW: We had the pleasure of doing a handful of shows out east this past April with the band Turbo from Halifax. Highly recommend people check them out because they shred hard.

AU: What does Deadwolff do for Summer fun?

DW: Sip on a few lites pool side after some tasty jams.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

DW: I'd like to think we're pretty straight forward. We're Deadwolff, and we're the new wave of heavy rock n' roll.

AU: Any final words for our readers? Especially our Western Canadian bangers who are going to see you.

DW: We're very excited to come out to the west coast and bring our high energy tunes and show out to all you fine folks. If you're reading this, we hope you'll be able to make it out to a gig. Cheers.

www.linktr.ee/Deadwolff

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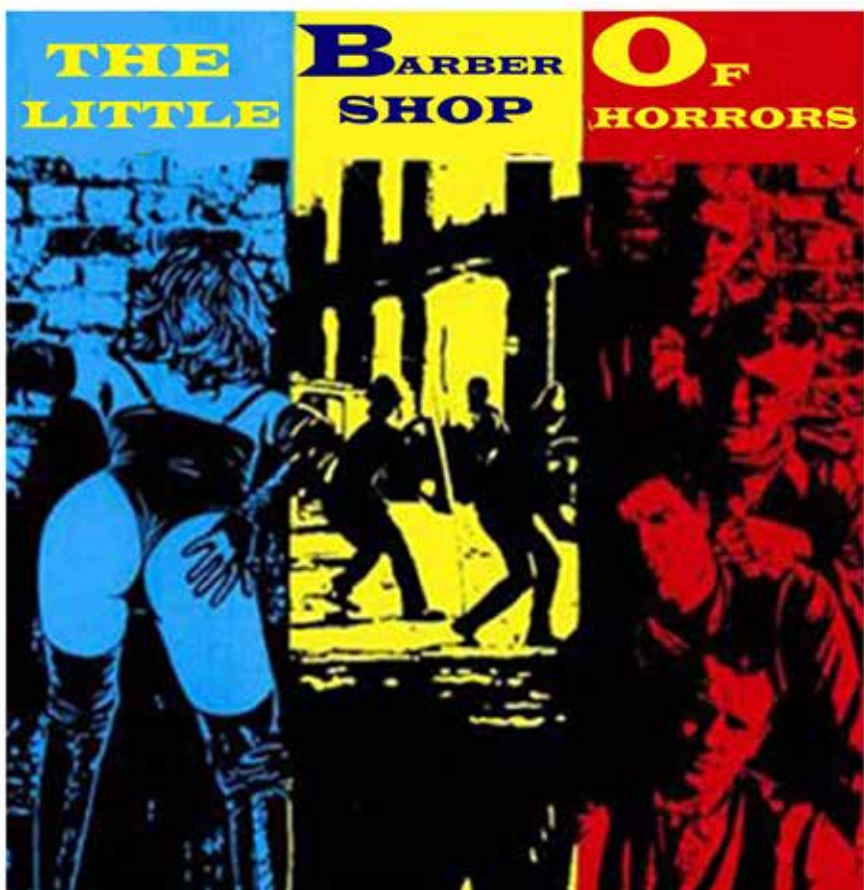
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SHRED SESSION

disaster by any means but it's in need of some upgrading. So we're going to see if we can approach the town government and try to make that happen somehow. Parksville is a fun park, though.

AU: Are you currently manning the shop in Qualicum Beach?

PD: I am at the moment. This is bigger square footage than we have in the city so the ultimate plan is to move our mail order operation over here as well.

AU: Do you still have a PD's Hot Shop location in Japan as well?

PD: Japan is still going, Vancouver's still going. No changes on those at all, just the add on the Qualicum Beach shop and museum.

AU: Are there any new band themed Skull Skates skateboards coming out?

PD: We just dropped the Entombed stuff, and there was a Blasphemy board too. We've always worked with all kinds of different bands, which I really love. The recent black metal boards have been cool. It's been neat for some people to discover that genre has pretty much come out of skateboarding.

AU: Will there be, or has there been a Skull Skates documentary?

PD: There is Resist Control that we did years ago that was released on DVD. It was essentially footage that we had as well as stolen footage just sort of cobbled together to be sort of a history of skateboarding.

AU: Skull Skates has mostly stuck with the same black and white aesthetics over the years, is there a reason for that?

PD: We've done colours, but I mostly do that just to mess with people because it annoys some people. We've done some pretty eye gouging colours but predominantly black with white is our deal. That's kind of people know us for. I have this little thing where I like the company to be reflective of skateboarding itself.

AU: Skull Skates has produced snowboards in the past. Is that something you still do?

PD: Not at the moment. We produced snowboards officially from '83 to '98. So a 15 year run. In the beginning it was not easy to sell snowboards because people didn't know what they were.

You had to take people out and basically go up a mountain and demo one to sell it. That was the first five years. The middle five was kind of cool.

Then the last five was just trying to fend off competitors from the ski industry that wanted a piece of snowboarding.

AU: What can people expect when they come and check out the the new shop and your Pop Culture Museum?

PD: The museum is not ready yet. We're renovating and we haven't got our collection over here yet so it's really going to be spring of next year for the museum. But at the moment what people can expect is, we have this tendency to go overboard on the hard goods side of things, like way too many decks and trucks and

wheels and pretty much we've got the same format going right now in Qualicum. So what you can expect at the moment is an old fashioned skateboard shop with lots of skateboards in it.

AU: A lot of the original Skull Skates boards are obviously quite valuable now. Do you have any plans to reissue some boards like maybe the Hosoi Hammerhead?

PD: We've reissued tons of boards. The Hammerhead, I don't think is going to happen.

Skull Skates is at the moment and has been for a couple of decades been really low key. You're not going to get rich off of royalties if you do a project with Skull Skates because we only make 50 to 100 boards. So someone like Christian Hosoi probably wouldn't fit into that.

When we were originally doing Christian's boards we were doing 1000s of them but we're not set up to do that now. Whereas a lot of the other riders that we used to sponsor, they're cool, they just want to do it to do it because it's something fun to do.

AU: Anything else you want to mention or promote?

PD: Thanks to you guys for supporting skateboarding for I don't know how many years you've been bringing the paper by our store, but it's always good to flip through it and see support of the Jaks and the music and the art scene. I think we got a similar thing going, right? Which is to support the culture. So thanks for that.

skullskates.com

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Skull Skates

Interview with founder PD
by Ira "Hammerhead" Hunter



As Canada's oldest skate shop, PD's Hot Shop has been building and selling skateboards non-stop since it was established in 1976. By skaters, for skaters, they specializing in Skull Skates products and other hard to find items. True to their roots, they are still a hardcore skateboard shop.

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with today?

PD: This is PD, some people know me from Skull Skates or the Hot Shop.

AU: What's new and exciting these days?

PD: The big news is our new location on Vancouver Island in Qualicum Beach. We opened here to get a bigger space that we couldn't afford in the city, and we are setting up a pop culture museum dedicated to vintage skateboards, bicycles, snowboards and toys.

AU: Will it be a similar exhibit to the one you did at the Vancouver Museum?

PD: That was the original motivation. We had a portion of our skateboard collection that was exhibited there. Originally it was scheduled for six months but was extended to 18 months and broke attendance records. What we realized with that show is that a lot of people who are non skateboarders are still interested in skateboard culture. That was the stimulus to think of how could we do this

ourselves.

AU: So where is this new spot located?

PD: We're right in downtown Qualicum Beach, which is pretty central as far as the layout of Vancouver Island. We've been getting visitors from all over the place.

AU: You didn't grow up around there did you?

PD: I grew up as a kid in the 70s in Nanaimo actually. After I left Nanaimo, my mom in the 80s opened and ran a PD's Hot Shop there and it seems like it was a pretty important shop for a lot of people. Like how a good skateboard shop is supposed to be, more than just the place you buy your skateboard.

AU: Exactly, I would go there every day. It's where I bought my first my skateboard a Hosoi Hammerhead Mini. Every day your mom would crow like a rooster for everyone and do the cockadoodledoo.

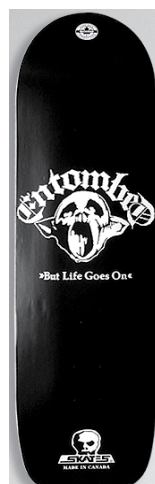
PD: Oh yeah, she's a neat lady. She was an old lady at that time already when she opened the store but she wasn't fond of taking any shit off of anybody. So it was kind of a cool combination.

AU: She was young at heart for sure and like a second mom to a lot of people.

PD: That's awesome.

AU: Are there any cool skate parks around the Parksville/Qualicum Beach area?

PD: There's a couple. There is one in each town and the one here needs some love. It's not a





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Modern Terror

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous or infamous for?

B: I'm Brett a.k.a. Limo. I guess I am most famous for working with NOFX for two decades. I think I am most infamous for launching the career of one Bif Naked by buying her a bus ticket back to Winnipeg from Vancouver to sing for Gorilla Gorilla.

AU: Who is in the band with you and what does it say on your Tinder Profiles?

B: Jeff Doran plays guitar and sings, Jamie Swann plays bass and sings. They write all the songs but we as a group do the arrangements. I think we only have Grindr profiles.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, and let us know what you guys are all about.

B: We formed a bit over 10 years ago and we formed by chance. Jeff and Jamie and I were looking to start something new. Our first jam we knew we had a chemistry. Jeff and Jamie were looking for someone that could play more punk than rock and I was their Huckleberry. We are all about writing and playing songs that stick a middle finger in the eye of conformity. We play this music because we are "lifers" and love the energy that is punk rock and we like to ooo and ahhh.

AU: Describe the band's

sound if possible.

B: It's like early nineties skate punk. Most songs are tongue in cheek but Jeff writes often writes more serious songs. We like speed but we love a good hook. We're all about having fun.

AU: Have you released an album recently? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?

B: We were fortunate enough to hook up with Cursed Blessings out of Toronto. The vinyl has three songs and the digital release has a bonus track. We were so excited to be able to put out our

music on vinyl as that has always been a dream of ours and CB totally dialed us!!

The vinyl looks sick and we are proud to be able to work with them and be on their roster

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

B: I like them all, it's like you are asking me to pick a favourite child. But I do enjoy playing "I'm the only Cokehead at the party."

AU: What's the story behind the single "Quarantine Queen"?

B: Jeff wrote that at the height of all the vivid madness. He can up with the hook and we built into something special. It's about a guy who is locked away and lonely and living in the online world that grew out of Covid. It's a live song about a lonely guy looking for the elusive love we all look for.

AU: How has it been working with Cursed Blessings Records on this release? What makes them unique as far as record labels go?

B: They care and it's Al and Doug's passion that makes them special. They have both been doing this forever, like us, they are lifers in this world we call Punk Rock.

AU: You had a song called "The Disease" about a global pandemic you put out about 10 years ago, is this whole thing your fault?

B: Yes, sorry.

AU: How have you been surviving the Apocalypse? Any survival tips to share?

B: We have kept busy jamming. My tip is keep doing what you love and whatever it takes to keep you sane.

AU: Also please tell us about your previous album *Hardcore '18* if possible.

B: We made that record with Garth Richardson. It was the first time we were able to record in a five-star studio. It's also where we got to meet Jeremy Patch that did our 7". I think Garth really brought the best out in us and we brought our A game. Being able to record with more than \$10000 worth of mics in a world class studio was a bucket list thing for all of us. The record was an homage to DOA *Hardcore81*, so we bit the style of the album. We had a diverse group of songs on

that album and are still proud of it.

AU: What's the music scene on the Sunshine Coast like?

B: Small and incestuous.

AU: Any tour plans?

B: Yes. We hope to get out to Calgary and Edmonton. Maybe we'll be lucky and get some dates with Teenage Bottlerocket.

AU: Does Limo have any fresh NOFX dirt to share from his backstage adventures? Are they un-cancelled yet?

B: No fresh dirt but *Punk in Drublic* is on again!

AU: Any pre-pandemic Pennywise tour stories to share?

B: Well how we ended up on that tour is a funny story. We were supposed to play Punk Rock Bowling that year but I got offered to do monitors and drums by Pennywise, so I had to choose between spending money on our show or making money with Pennywise. I needed the money, but I also told Fletcher if anything happened with the openers which was the Isotopes, my band would fill in. Well on the day I was supposed to tell the guys, Fletcher called me and said, "The Isotopes have to bail, you got five mins, your boys in or out?" And I said, "They're in," without even asking them, ha! So at practice I told them I had to cancel PRB and why, and they were bummed. But then I said, "Well how would you like to do five shows with Pennywise out east, including a night on the tour bus? Needless to say they agreed and were way more stoked! Thankfully Jeff and Jamie are the best!

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

B: As of now just our new 7", but we have enough new material for another!

AU: Any final words for our readers?

B: Buy records, go to shows, start a band, keep the faith.

facebook.com/ModernTerror

Absolute Book Review

William S. Hayes

William S. Hayes' first book, *Burden of Concrete*, offers the reader a harrowing account of the author's life. His tale begins with his teenage years and a brief foray into juvenile hall, and then on to the county jail. By the early '90s, in the midst of an exploding Seattle music scene, he falls victim to the scourge of heroin addiction. The chaotic lifestyle that ensues thrusts him into a world of concrete: polluted cells and tainted streets. As his despair intensifies, the depravity and time does also, until he hits the road for Los Angeles in a feeble attempt to escape. Upon arrival, he manages to graduate to California's prison system and the hell inside. Hayes portrays this world with a clear perception and casts a light on what it's like to do time, not from the viewpoint of a convict trying to build a reputation inside the walls, but as a visitor. There are moments when you feel his fear and desperation, and others when you laugh with him. His love for prose is evident in the telling of his story, leaving the reader to question how such an adept mind could find himself confined to a life of doing time. The honesty presented will have you hoping he breaks free of the shackles and saddened when he succumbs to his demons yet again.

Hayes' second book is titled *King of the Road* and will



be hitting the shelves in July. It's an adventure book in the spirit of Kerouac and Steinbeck,

had they been influenced by Darby Crash and El Duce. The story documents a hitchhiking journey made from Seattle to San Francisco in the summer of '92, and is centered around a skate team that formed in the Bay Area in 1979 called the Jak's. In it he explores the burgeoning DIY Burnside culture of Portland as well as the "new school" crews coming on to the scene in the Embarcadero in San Francisco. The Jaks are ever-present in the story, offering the reader a tall glass of debauchery to go with the main course of road adventure.



William S. Hayes (AKA Scottie Schmidt) is a skateboarder from Seattle who now resides in Los Angeles. He is a member of the infamous skate crew the Jak's and sings and plays guitar in the Dick Dialers. He is an avid writer and his work is available on Punk Hostage Press.



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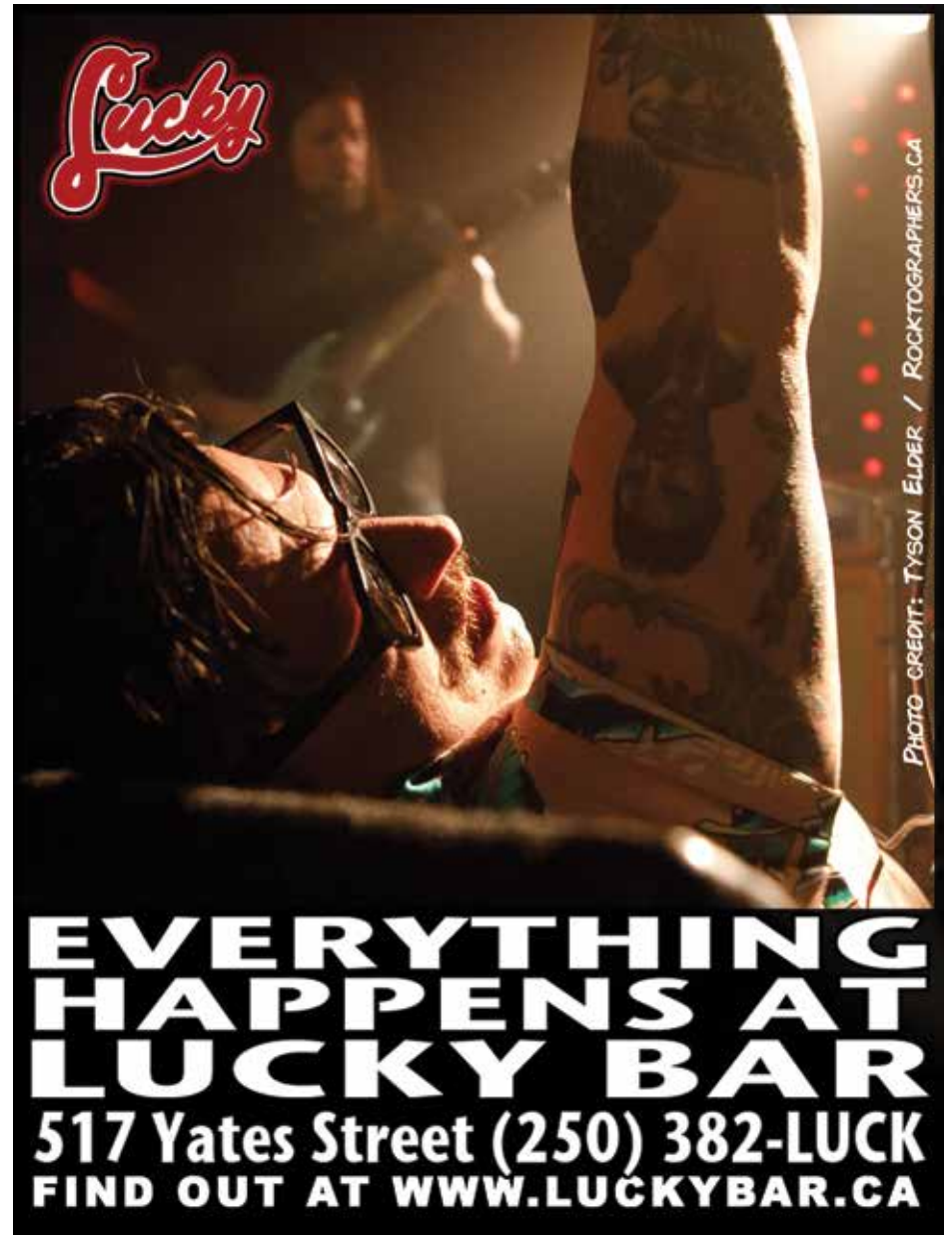
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SHADOW CABINET WITH GRAYSON CALIGARI:

Rhea's Obsession

When we think of 90s goth some obvious USA based bands come to mind like Switchblade Symphony, London After Midnight, and The Cruxshadows. But Canada has its share of amazing goth bands as well. One of these was the Toronto based Rhea's Obsession, offering a rich tapestry of sound comes from blending exotic scales with ambient synths and tribal style industrial drums. If you enjoy bands like Vancouver's Delirium and the San Francisco based Wench you are sure to enjoy Rhea's Obsession. The band formed in 1995 and started by doing soundtrack work. In Canada they received a fair amount of critical acclaim, but to the south they were considered an obscurity.

According to their bio on the Metropolis records website: "Jim and Sue decided to record a full length record, that eventually became Initiation. This disc was released in 1996 to critical acclaim, rising quickly through the Candian alternative, new age, experimental, and goth-industrial charts. On the strength of this record, the television series La Femme Nikita licensed two tracks for their worldwide syndicated show."

The 90s saw the blending of industrial, ambient, and goth by many bands. However, Rhea's

Obsession made their own unique mark on this sound. Bands like the Tea Party touched upon similar music themes but never seemed to fully embrace the gothic vibe. While Tea Party explored

the 60s and 70s inspired jams. Rhea's Obsession plunged fully into ritualistic occult cool. You can hear western esoteric lyrics, middle eastern drums, and hungarian minor scales in their music. They play huge synth pads and acoustic instruments blended with electronic drums. This is not to say that they totally eschew the influence of the 70s. Yet their sound is more Pentangle than Zeppelin; which in my opinion is a very good thing. They recorded a groovy 90s gothic-rock version of the "Door's End of the Night."

Unfortunately hunting for their music online reveals only two albums: *Initiation* and *Between Earth and Sky*. Fortunately, both albums are outstanding. It would be a treat to hear these tracks played in a nightclub again. These two CDs contain a level

of sonic depth that rewards the listener and have a unique groove that will appeal to those who enjoy dancing. Sue Hutton, the lead vocalist, has since started a new project called Indarra which she described to soundscape magazine as: "music to listen to when we need strength; soothing; truth. Layers of harmonic female vocals

glide from vulnerability to power, moving between Gaelic, Bulgarian tones over dark soundscapes. Indarra is spices from around the world – layered guitars that at times don't sound anything like guitars, bass that sounds like it's an Erhu or some other type of Eastern bowed instrument, Tabla, percussion with Kalimba reversed and effected so it sounds like something you can't recognize...mesmerizing analog synth tracks." The interview is a detailed and intimate look that gives us personal insight into one of Canada's most talented singers. The link is below. Indarra's 1st album, *Walk on Fire*, is the result of the work started as the third Rhea's Obsession album. While the 90s may have been the golden age of goth. It is good to see that the musicians who took the sound of the 80s forward to the 90s are still creating new sonic delights.

Walk on Fire was released in 2018 and can be found by searching "Indarra Walk on Fire" on you-tube or another streaming service and scrolling way down past the irrelevant results. Due to the lack of searchable words this album didn't receive the attention it deserved. Nowadays bands have to give their albums names like *Florid Draconian Asylum*, an album name I created by searching "least used words in the English language" and picking three. Nonetheless *Walk on Fire* is worth seeking out, though it may be a bit more difficult to find than Rhea's Obsession. If you are already a fan of Rhea's



Obsession and Indarra I recommend checking out the following bands: Judgment of Paris, Wench, The Tea Party, Frolic, Delirium, and Machine in the Garden

<https://rheasobsession.bandcamp.com/>

<https://www.metropolis-records.com/artist/rheas-obsession>

<https://www.soundscapemagazine.com/an-interview-with-sue-hutton-of-indarra/>

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BLAST FROM THE PAST



Rik playing the local circuit and made him an offer he did not refuse and Triumph was formed. They immediately started writing, recording and playing. The new Toronto Trio put out two albums in 1976 and 1977 on the Attic label when the American label RCA offered them an international record deal that would take them to the top, and Triumph gratefully accepted the offer. The 1st LP on the

TRIUMPH

Interview with Rik Emmett Part 1

*Triumph with Angel City at Vancouver Coliseum
March 16, 1985*

by Clark 'Super' Mantei

Welcome back to Blast From The Past.

In this issue we travel back though our triumphant past until we land on Saturday March 16th, 1985 at the Coliseum in Vancouver to enjoy an evening with R'N'R legends TRIUMPH.

Let us begin. In 1975, Toronto guitarist Rik Emmett met up with bassist Mike Levine and drummer Gil Moore and Rik was asked to join the new group that Mike and Gil had envisioned. The pair had been working in bands with other players and even had the Canadian label 'Attic Records' already supporting them. Mike and Gil had a blueprint of the band they wanted to form and had already chosen the name Triumph. They met

label comprised songs from the first two Attic LPs and it chose the title of *Rock and Roll Machine* and then for the next decade they recorded album after album of sheer musical brilliance until 1988 when Rik departed. Triumph definitely left its mark as the music never held anything but a magical place in our hearts and minds. Triumph

reunited in 2008 briefly for the Sweden Rock Festival and then again in 2019 when they played a special performance as the band had been working with Banger Films for 2021 documentary film Triumph: Rock and Roll Machine. The

film captures the legend that is Triumph. I highly recommend it to everyone.

I recently interviewed Rik Emmett about Triumph and the 'powerful magic that is Rik Emmett'.

AU: Let's go back to the beginning of Triumph. You met Mike and Gil, who were in a band called Abernathy Shagnaster, and you were in a band called Act III. So how did the name Triumph actually come about?

Rik Emmett: Well, if you think Abernathy Shagnaster is weird, the actual name was Abernathy Shagnaster's Wash and Wear Rock and Roll Band. It was the time where bands around Toronto would use those sorta names. Anyways, it was like a weekend band, playing covers, and blues. Back then every high school would get budgets and they could hire bands. And once a month, they'd have dances or concerts, so Gil would get bookings for his band. He had connections to the high school kids that were the conveners to set up the bookings for bands. So it was one girl in particular that had an interest in his band and wanted to book it, and she was talking to Gil on the phone and said, "Oh, you're going to be starting some new band? My friends and I were sitting around, and we made a list of great band names." and Gil said, "Well, send it to me because I'm looking for a name for a three piece rock extravaganza kind of band that I'm going to start up." So she sent the list and he and Mike picked the name 'TRIUMPH' from that girls list. So that's where it came from. When they asked me to join, they already had posters printed up and stickers, and they had contracts for gigs. They offered me a weekly wage and I stepped in and it worked out very well from the start.

AU: What do you recall from that first Triumph gig at Simcoe High School in 1975?

RE: I just remember the flash pots and cop car lights and the reactions of people. I remember we had one of those large five ton trucks so when we pulled up to the gym the kids were like, "They must be some kind of giant arena rock band and they've come to play at our high school gym? How cool!" Recently there's a documentary that's been done by Banger Films about Triumph. There's a quote from Larry Gowan in the movie where he says, "I remember going to see Triumph and they had enough equipment in the gym to play Maple Leaf Gardens. They were making a statement that they already belonged and they were a big thing. We are huge. We are Triumph!" That was always the thing about Triumph, we were always making it seem like it was bigger than life.

AU: Concerning studio techniques, did Mike play a big part in that as he had produced the previous band's records?

RE: Indeed Mike was a big influence and asset to the band. He definitely had studio engineering skills and worked hard to keep on top of it. Gil always facilitated the studio connections and I found myself in great company with those two to record what we'd created. We worked out so many musical ideas that I'd present to them. We poured our hearts and skills into those albums. Mike was always at the helm. A great producer.

AU: Triumph as a name was inspiring and song

titles like *Hold On, Fight The Good Fight, Never Surrender*, and *Follow Your Heart* resonated throughout the youth via radio and basement parties where the turntables spun the soundtrack of those magical happy times. As young Canucks, Triumph was part of our heritage.

RE: Well, I wouldn't want to take too much credit, but I'm certainly aware of the impact it had. We had a good formula and I'm really glad people enjoyed it.

AU: I clearly remember the day after my paper route that my brother had the *Allied Forces* record with him as he entered the basement. It was a life changer. That cover transfixed me and then I dropped the needle. Wow! It played over and over. That's when I truly took note of you guys.

Incredible. Then came

***Never Surrender* and *Thunder Seven* and then I saw you on that tour. A magical evening indeed. I will never forget the experience.**

The spectacle and computer graphics with the screens and lasers with explosions added to those moving lights pretty much blew my teenage mind.

RE: Wow, that's great to hear. I think *Allied Forces* was the one where we found our footing. We figured out what the band was about, and we built the Metalworks Studios. We had a home to be self indulgent, in terms of pre-production and production. So all of that stuff resulted in tunes like "Fight the Good Fight" and "Magic Power".

AU: Neil Peart once said: "If you can keep the enthusiasm you had when you were 16 or 17 and retain that throughout your life, you can always find the youthful spirit in the creation of the arts."

RE: Well said, and it's true. I feel like music was always kind of a social thing and an intellectual pursuit. And then Rock is a very physical thing, you're committing your body to it. But there's also a spirituality that exists. So music ends up being this thing where your body and your mind is

connected with your spirit.

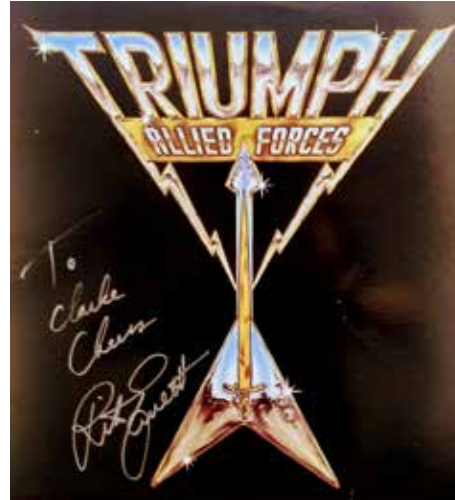
It's a very ephemeral kind of thing. So, yeah, when I wrote the song *Magic Power*, I wasn't kidding. I really did feel like there was a kind of a magical thing that's at work. And when you're in front of an audience, and you're making that connection, it's like communion in a way. We're talking about energies on different levels. I'm not a very religious guy, but I do feel like music is sort of where you're getting as close to the face of God as you're going to get!

AU: Amen to that! Triumph definitely found their muse. Thanks for keeping us all amused.

And at that I'll say take care Rik and let's continue later.

Rock Out and Roll On
- Clark 'Super' Mantei

To Be Continued Next issue...





Sergio Aragonés - Part 3

Absolute Underground: Have you ever drawn anything that might be considered risqué or sexy?

Sergio Aragonés: No, but in the beginning I illustrated a lot of books for a company called Kanrom. They published various books and one of them was just feet making love with some text. Just the footprints of a couple as they have been making love. You can see that woman's prints are open and the male prints going down. The title of the book was *Sam, the Ceiling Needs Painting*. Then I illustrated a book called *Fanny Hillman: Memoirs of a Jewish Madam*. Then I did another one, *Aunt's In Your Pants: Memoirs of a Dirty Old Woman*.

AU: The one sexy woman you draw is Groo's girlfriend, Chakaal, and you mentioned that she was based upon your wife.

Sergio: Yes. She was a dancer on Broadway. She worked with Bob Fosse. She was in the original Chicago on Broadway. She is so beautiful, we're still together and still very happy. Her name is Charlene Ryan. She was in a movie called *The Last Married Couple in America* and also in the movie *Sweet Charity*.

AU: Which character in the Groo comic books is based upon your daughter?

Sergio: She is called Thais, the princess Thais. I did a four issue series about a little princess. I drew her as a kid and I drew her as an adult. The princess Thais that needed Groo to be helpful. That was a fun story.

AU: How many years have you been attending San Diego Comic-Con? Could you describe the experience for someone who has never been there?

Sergio: Well, I wasn't at the first one and I don't think the second one either. But from the third one on I was attending, not as a guest but as an individual. I was in Los Angeles and I discovered it because Mark Evanier had been going there from the beginning. I knew him as a kid, I talked to his comic book club once. That's how we met. But then, when I started going to the conventions, I think the first one I went to was in New York in the 70s and Mark Evanier was there too. I did a poster for them. But then I saw there was one in San Diego, that was just a drive. So I went to all of them after that. It's a great place to go. But you have to go with a plan. You just cannot say, "Oh, I'm going to San Diego Comic-Con" and then the only thing you do is complain. Because there's a lot of people, there's so much to see and they don't have a plan. But if you go and

you get your ticket and you study what is there and you make a list of what you want to see and what you want to do. When that's over, you have the rest of the time to do whatever you want.

AU: The first time I went in 1999, just as a fan, I got so overwhelmed. I had to leave halfway through the day and go to the beach to decompress. There was just so much to

see and so much to take in. But I've had a table and a booth there since 2000 and everybody's like family now. It's been hard missing it. But hopefully this year, it'll all be okay again.

Sergio: Well, I can't because of my age. I'm not going anywhere until it's safe. That's probably the thing I miss the most besides family and friends in the coffee house, is to see my colleagues over there, all my friends. Because my European publishers arrive there and I have dinner with them and the Mad guys go there and I have dinner with them. It's a lot of fun. At the convention, I sit at my table and find out what the fans like, and what they dislike. It's great to see a lot of repeat fans. The best thing is when you get a fan that is an old man and he brings his son and his grandson and the old man says that when he was young, he was reading my stuff and now the grandson is reading it. There's a lot of very fantastic moments at the convention. But people also complain that it is not so much about comics now but it is more about movies and television. That people only go there for that. Well, so what? I love it because I get so many new people that walk around and they see my booth and they come and say "Oh my God, I remember MAD" and they talk to me. They realize that Groo is my work, buy a few copies, and I have a new fan.

AU: Groo the Wanderer may seem to some people like just a funny barbarian comic book. But each story always has a moral and stories that can relate to present day experiences as well. I am wondering if you had anything planned that might relate to the COVID pandemic?

Sergio: Well, I did one based about AIDS but it wasn't AIDS. It was a coughing disease people would start coughing and passing it around and they had to stop kissing. But with COVID I would have to base it on the stupidity of people more than the pandemic itself.

AU: I guess you're right. I thought there could be a moral somewhere but it's hard to think what it would be.

Sergio: I don't know maybe one day when the time is right. I did a cartoon when it was starting and it was a guy going to a costume party and he was dressed like the

virus and everybody was moving away from him and he says to his wife "Too soon?" But that was just one gag. I probably would have done a Mad

Look at the pandemic but not for a Groo comic book. All the Groo stories have a moral, that is guaranteed, and the majority of them are based on things that happen in reality. With religion, with politics, with homelessness. So yeah, we take things that have happened and use them in a humorous way. We have nice satires. I have made fun of modern art. I have made fun of gurus. Groo became a guru and all kinds of things. Just with Marvel alone I did 120 issues of Groo and I didn't miss one in 10 years.

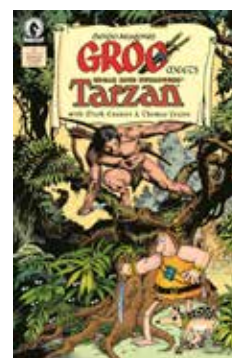
AU: Groo has recently fought and teamed up with Conan as well as Tarzan. Is anyone else planned for the future for Groo to team-up with?

Sergio: No! No! For the first one with Conan, we have had many letters from fans asking who would win in a fight Conan or Groo? I don't like crossovers because you are interfering with the creation of somebody else. But I figured well, Conan was a barbarian so I can do something with that. So I used myself and Mark as buffers. So there are three stories there. I don't alter Conan at all. Have you seen a movie by Akira Kurosawa called *Rashomon*?

AU: Yes.

Sergio: Something happens and the story is told by three different people and all of them tell it differently. It took me close to a year to come up with the idea to do it. Because Groo cannot beat Conan and Conan cannot beat Groo. So how can they fight? I was watching that Kurosawa movie on television and there it was, the story told by different people. It

COMIC BOOK ICONS



was a perfect solution.

Then the one with Tarzan, Dark Horse Comics owns the rights to publish the Tarzan books and they kept asking if we could do a crossover. So I used the same element, we included ourselves in it and that was a buffer with Tarzan. It is me getting completely drunk or whatever and dreaming all these stories. Half of the comic is myself doing stupid things.

We also did another series of three which Mark really wrote almost all of because he knows so much about comics. We did *Sergio Massacres Marvel*, *Sergio Destroys DC*, and *Sergio Stomps Star Wars*. The three of them came out at the same time published by three different companies. Marvel, DC, and Dark Horse and of course we were in all three of them. It was a lot of fun.

AU: My friend Ricky Jak is a super MAD fan and he was wondering if Groo was in a marginal à la Mad Magazine, what would he do?

Sergio: Oh, I have done a few of them. In one of them it was raining and Groo was keeping dry by

swatting away the rain with his sword. Another one was about eating animals and then behind Groo were the parents and things like that. Doing what Groo does best, screwing up. So yes, I have used him a few times in the marginals.

To be continued next issue:

groo.com

sergioaragones.com

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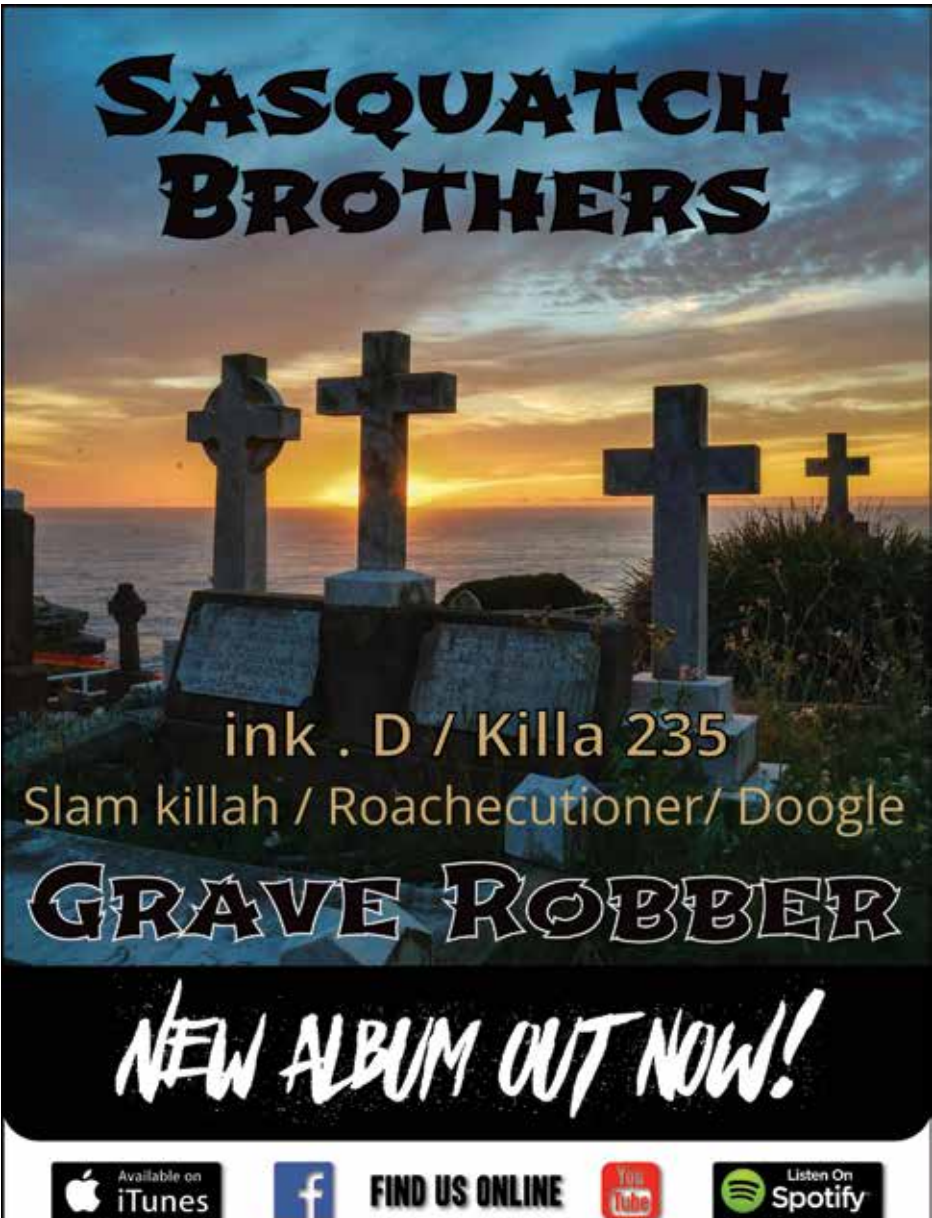


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Toy Tiger

Interview by Chuck Andrews and Daryl Bidner

Absolute Underground: Who are we speaking to and what are you best known for?

FF: You are speaking to Finn Faithfull. I am probably best known as a Vancouver skin who is quite outspoken. Recently I drew attention as the activist photographed with a sign stating that "antivaxxer truckers are inbred" and it exploded on the internet. We won't get into that.

When I was younger, I was always running around getting into trouble, so where that's concerned I guess it depends which police force you ask, haha! For the record, Chris Merrell of 333 fame, who is also an up and coming local film producer, is helping me with my editing because I have both the disadvantages and the advantages of a dyslexic mind.

AU: How long has Toy Tiger been around?

FF: Toy Tiger has been around since 2018, when our lead guitarist Frankie Scars and I started jamming out of our house in the DTES. Shortly thereafter, my best homie Chris, who has played in the last several projects I have done in Canada,

jumped on board and we slowly started to build the band.

AU: Who are the other members of the band?

FF: Frankie Scarz plays lead guitar, Chris Merrell plays rhythm guitar, Bertrand plays the Bass, Carlos Russell plays the drums, and I write and sing.

AU: Have there been any shows within the skinhead scene lately? Does Toy Tiger have any shows coming up?

FF: We are playing with skinhead bands The Enforcers and Pure Impact on May 21st at Bullet Farm. Later this summer we are playing with legendary French oi! Band Komintern Sect, on Day 1 of Have a Good Laugh, an annual 3 day festival that is probably in its 5th or 6th year. I'm so excited that skinhead shit has a draw in events like this in 2022.

AU: Can we expect any new music coming out any time soon?

FF: Our first full length, *Take a Trip on the Tiger Side* is almost done. Recorded on a reel to reel tape machine, it maintains our ethos of using strictly analogue methods to convey our sound. We're thrilled with our new batch of tracks and anticipate releasing something later this summer.

AU: We recently spoke to Mike Underwood about his

Compilation of British Columbia Boverver anthems. You must be excited that Toy Tiger was included and that the compilation record is out!

FF: Dude! Mike, Meaghan and their family are such lovely people. We are so insanely stoked. So stoked Mike made that happen.

AU: Where did the name Toy Tiger come from?

FF: I drew up this little skinhead cat with an idiotic grin with a little speech bubble saying "meoi!" on the wall of my bedroom. At first I called him Boy

Tiger. At some point I heard someone talk about those little cats people breed to have stripes and call them 'Toy Tigers,' and suddenly it all made sense.

AU: You guys have a very fun energy about you; the lyrics are very humorous. Most skinhead bands lack this. How come you chose to be funny?

FF: Funny like how? What do you mean I'm funny? Like I'm a clown, like I'm here to amuse you? Sorry, I had to... Interestingly, I am the only skinhead in the band. I write almost all the songs, aside from those that Frank and I write together. Franky adds the icing, and the structuring tends to be a collaborative process. I have been immersed in skinhead culture for a decade and a half and I would like my skinhead friends to like my music, but my personal vision is an amalgam of glam/boverrock/punk that is further tinged by the eclecticism of my cohorts to create something unique. Fun-loving streetrock and glam elements become synergized by Frankie's powerful lead guitar-playing.. Matching that dude's guitar shredding is such a pleasure, and it boosts me to write fun catchy singalongs. With the lyricism and esthetic are textured by darkness.

Like a lot of people In some ways I have had a gnarly life; I live in the neighborhood most affected by drug addiction and mental illness in the country, if not North America. I frequently see violence and struggle on my own doorstep. I take so much pain in, and I personally only wanna give out fun at the moment.

I absolutely love hard sounding oi! but I have also always had a soft spot for bands that project a



hopefulness, like The Business, Warzone, 7 Seconds, etc. As a young teen I was really into youth crew and positive hardcore as well.

This band is primarily boverver/ glam rock influenced at the end of the day, and that stuff has an inherent playfulness to it. I've always loved comic books and pulpy everything. I make surrealist, campy short films too.. Everything that comes out of me lately is pulpy, melodramatic or surreal but more to take the piss out of how fucked up our reality

has been... it's just the way my brain works. This is definitely my favorite question of the bunch and it cuts to the core of my/the band's personality.

AU: Who does your artwork? We love the aesthetic. It's very fitting of the Toy Tiger name and sound.

FF: That would be Graham Chorny!!! He is the fucking man. His instagram is @grimblack_ and he's done all the hardcore show flyers in Vancouver for years. He is a staple for Vancouver Hardcore. He did the poster for the upcoming Enforcers show at Bullet Farm May 21st. Holy fucking shit, he's such a good illustrator.

AU: Thanks for the interview. Anything else you would like to mention or talk about?

FF: Thanks Chuck, Thanks Daryl. Thank you for supporting the scene by doing this. Thank you Absolute Underground. I needed the opportunity to show the world my eccentricities, haha.

Big Boots, Bigger Hearts!

@toytiger_streetrock



Catching up with Andy Anderson from Cavity Curiosity

Interview & Photography by John Carlow

Absolute Underground: Say hello and tell us what you've been doing over the last two rather unsettled years?

Andy: Hi John, it's Andy here from Cavity, it sure has been an unsettling couple of years! I have been insanely busy keeping the store alive. With the store closed we made a website for local pickup, and it was a lot of fun to post stuff online but also very weird with the world being so unstable. I'm happy our doors are open again, we are forever indebted to everyone that supported us. Without all the help we received the shop would have closed for sure. Also, it has been decades since I had no live shows to either put on or go to, so most of my free time went to catching up on things I never got to, like making Art, sorting photos & footage of past live shows. Hopefully I will release a book in the near future, and I'll definitely give you a copy!

AU: For anyone who doesn't know, describe your store, Cavity Curiosity Shop.

Andy: It's a dark cube on the outskirts of downtown that a lot of weirdos call home. On the first floor we have vintage shirts & paperbacks, music, movies, occult books and local art. Upstairs we have our ever increasing punk & metal selection, big screen video games and even more movies!

AU: I see lot of vinyl...VHS tapes...cassettes in your inventory. Seems to sell well. Tell us about the market for these formats.

Andy: Yes, we have a CAVE OF VHS TAPES and lots of bands are too broke these days to release vinyl, so cassettes really took off again. We are lucky to be surrounded by a community of collectors. All these formats are very sought after on the island. It's never a dull moment here, we always have people coming in showing us the crazy things they found. Thankfully the city is home to a bunch of great record stores: Ditch, Vinyl Envy, Turntable and my neighbors Supreme Echo & Q-Electronic all make Victoria a great place to hunt for forgotten gems.

AU: Tavern of the Damned was the gathering place for the Vic underground scene. Any thoughts you want to share about Logan's since it closed?

Andy: It's really unfortunate we lost Logans, Copper Owl and the Subculture Club. Between the three they kept the affordable metal & punk shows alive in Victoria. I miss the staff and all the regulars from the Tavern very much, they are all family to me. I also miss DJing our wild 80s and Goth nights there, and I hope to get those events rolling again somewhere soon. Happy to see the Phoenix Bar picked up most of the live shows this past while, it definitely has a similar vibe and the staff are awesome. I'm also excited about The Carlton Project in Esquimalt, they hosted the all ages Archagathus show recently and that's the first of many shows happening there.

AU: Is hosting / promoting live gigs again in your future?

Andy: Absolutely! I cancelled tons of events over the course of the pandemic, but I haven't been quick to jump back into promoting shows due to the fact that I have lung issues. Trust me, if this reopening had been for everyone including our immunocompromised punks, I would have kicked this town in the face DAY ONE with a bunch of events haha! I do have some things secretly planned for August I'll reveal. It's the 10-year anniversary of Cavity that will kick off with an outdoor show at the top of the month with Hoopsnake & Confusion Master from Germany playing a big party at the end.

AU: Will we see YOU in a band again??

Andy: Oh yeah! always got bands in the works. Shibboleth's vinyl still hasn't seen the light of day yet (someone please press it for us!) I hope we'll get together for a live show when that comes out. I'm also always doing my Noise projects live around town too. Playing Beacon Hill park in July with my friend Soma. We built a large Sculpture for the Art show under the Bay street bridge last weekend that doubles as a Light Theremin... so bring a flashlight to shine it at us... it will come through the PA system and rumble your guts!

AU: What bands are you listening to / excited about now?

Andy: I've been listening to a lot of Nightfell and Witch Vomit this week. Tons of albums out from new bands in town too. Check out Disposal, Hedonist, Body Rot, HELLSD & Fell Deeds.

I'm really excited for Mic from Altered Dead's birthday party in June with Androgyne, Low Blow, Jobsite and I hope Legit Heat plays in the Wrestling Ring!

AU: Victoria is going through a lot of changes in recent years. Your thoughts about it from a music scene/ business owner perspective?

Andy: I'll just say I'm always hopeful of this town. People move away a lot but shit is bad all over at this point. We need to come together on some big issues, elevate some fresh voices and get this high rent situation back down to earth so that people want to live here. Retail spaces are so expensive here, no one starting out can just risk an idea. It's really changed downtown and made a lot of businesses stressed out. But there are still lots of new shops opening, great ones surviving and every day someone tells me about a new project they are working on. I just hope people get offline and go support them now and we'll see what next year brings!

AU: Thoughts about anything else you want to talk about?

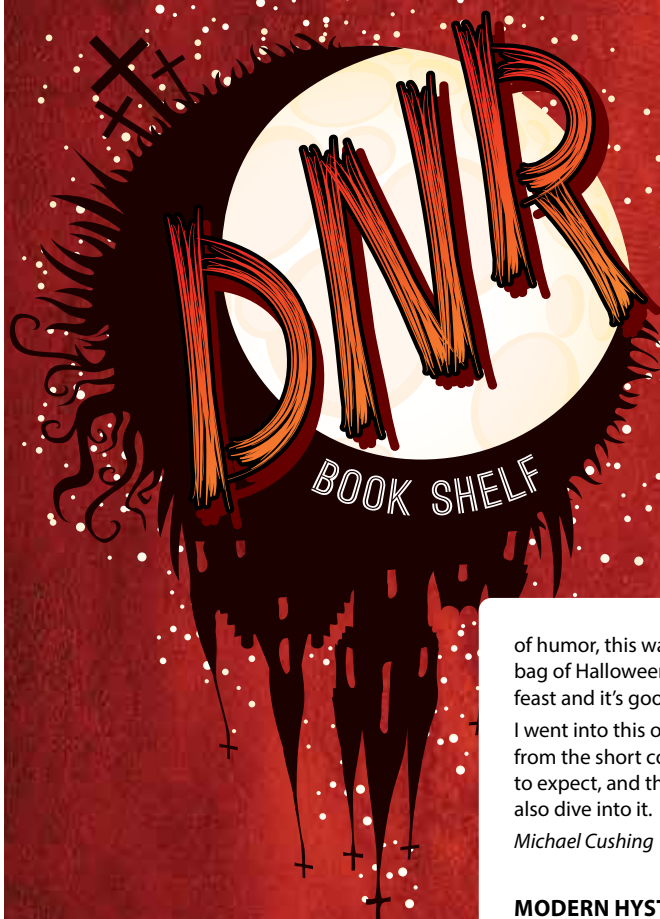
Andy: Yeah considering I've been dropping names like mad in this, haha, there is a METAL BBQ on June 18th at the Norway Hall, Wretched Toll Productions is putting it on.. Liminal Shroud, Devouring Void and Heidenland are playing... It's the first big show there since the bass from Knelt Rote's set caused the entire retirement complex out back to shit their pants and call the cops to shut it down. It's going to be an epic night, be there.

<http://instagram.com/cavitycuriosityshop>

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SEW SORRY



Aron Beauregard, Daniel J. Volpe
Independently Published
October 6, 2021
This was the perfect Halloween book, in my opinion. It had the perfect amount of gore and real life horror. It was both completely bizarre and absolutely

hilarious in parts.

For those with a truly sick appetite and sense

of humor, this was like getting that perfect bag of Halloween candy, where you can just feast and it's good right down to the last bite.

I went into this one pretty much blind, aside from the short cover blurb. I had no idea what to expect, and that's how I recommend you also dive into it.

Michael Cushing

MODERN HYSTERIA



Aron Beauregard
Independently Published
March 23, 2022
This was awesome. My two favorite horror authors that are currently active are Kristopher Triana and Aron Beauregard. I usually love Kristopher's work because of how dark it is;

beautiful prose and just stark darkness. Aron's work I usually love because most of his output at this point is so comically over the top with how gruesome the pictures he paints are, and how many taboos he chooses to break.

This time, Aron still writes a story that most

wouldn't really approach: a viral internet challenge that entices confused and depressed young children to kill themselves.

But he leaves out all of the humor that is usually present in his work. You also couldn't tell this story without making it excessively violent, but compared to some of his other titles, the level of violence is restrained. The prose that he uses shows how much he's grown as an author over the last couple of years.

I started my review off with a comparison here because I'm always attracted to different things, and I already explained why I love both authors. But this story is one that I would have expected from Kristopher instead of Aron.

Michael Cushing

CUCUMBERS AND COMFORTERS



Nikki Noir
Blood Bound Books
September 22, 2021

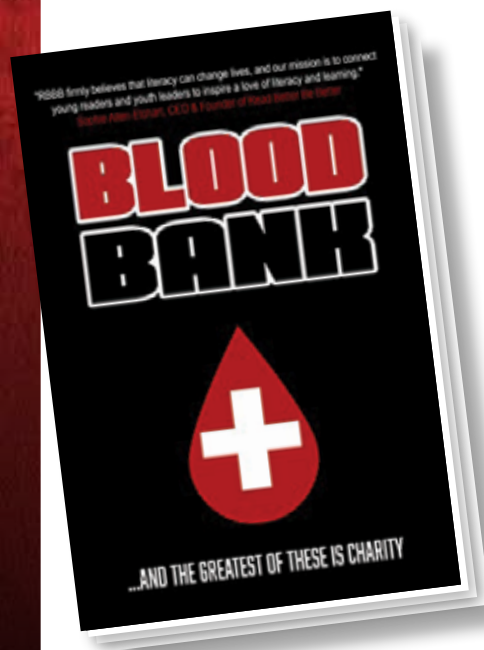
When I first selected this book I figured it would be some kinky fucked up porno shit that Noir knows how to do so well,

but once I got going, I was actually way off. I mean sure, there is some fucked up shit... just not the kind I was expecting from the title.

The book is actually a little more bizzaro than anything - half high school seniors coming of age and then randomly throw in a Kappa from traditional Japanese folklore (sort of an imp or little amphibious yōkai demon). We have a missing kid, a seniors' lake bash, anuses being cored out, loveable stoners, friendship and revenge all in one.

The book is super short, another one of her Petite Morts, so I won't give too much away. Jen, our senior misfit who befriends a kid named Dale she keeps running into at the local river where everyone kind of hangs out. She tells him the stories of the Kappas. This unexpected friendship is interrupted when Dale goes missing and his family really doesn't seem to give a shit. Jen is determined to put the pieces together and find Dale. Throw in the creature feature and gnarly bits, and it's a really weird, unique bizzaro story. A perfect airport or other quick read that you will not be disappointed by, because you just can't expect what will come next, especially the ending.

Demonika



A CHARITABLE ANTHOLOGY

Blood Bank is more than just an anthology. It's a milestone released by Blood Bound Books. A symbolic culmination in an evolutionary journey, they didn't realize until recently.

A lot has changed since Joseph and Marc opened Blood Bound Books in 2009. Back then, a major goal of theirs was to scare and shock people. To be totally indie and extreme, remembered for changing the world of horror fiction in ways only a non-conformist can.

Blood Bound Books has certainly accomplished this. They've also gotten better with age. One thing they know for sure though, is that over the years they've become different people and their goals have shifted slightly. They still want to change the world, but no longer concerned about it being the world of fiction.

More important than the legacy of 'best', 'scariest', or some other arbitrary title, they now want the company to be remembered for making a positive impact in the lives of children. So in 2019, Blood Bound Books changed its mission to: Spreading Hope Through Dark Fiction. Called Blood Bank: a symbolic culmination because while it is not the end of this journey by any means, it is the biggest undertaking so far in this new

trajectory—a five-year fundraiser for Read Better Be Better and Hagar's House.

Those who write and publish dark fiction have a huge responsibility. Horror and its numerous subgenres are not simply mindless stories of blood and guts, depressing and revolting topics—though many tales in this anthology are bleak. Dark fiction reflects aspects of real life. Aspects that make us uncomfortable, that trigger us, yet these topics are realities for many people in the world. In this book, there may be stories you enjoy more than others, but each author had a reason for giving life to the tale they contributed. We can learn much about ourselves and others through a horror story. We can grow and evolve. Perhaps like them, you're on a journey of evolution and don't realize it yet. After all, humans can only know light by first observing the dark.

It is crucial that we, each one of us, strive to contain the horrors of real life to the pages of fiction. Let's explore the depths of our own shadows through fictional characters rather than against one another. And as we come to know ourselves through the reading of dark fiction, we can better cultivate the main character we want to emulate in our own lives.

Everyone has toiled to make this anthology happen, from the authors who donated to this project, all the producers listed in the acknowledgements for their financial support, Drew Stepek & Godless for the cover art.

Anyone who purchases this anthology has improved childhood literacy and is giving displaced families a bit of peace during their own horrors.

Spreading hope through dark fiction is not what birthed Blood Bound Books, but it is a part of their future. In addition to Blood Bank, they are still giving away free books for blood donations, stocking classrooms with much needed literature, and supporting Shriner's Hospitals.

Blood Bank contains fourteen masters of horror and dark fantasy such as Livia Llewellyn, Kristopher Triana, Kealan Patrick Burke, Mona Kabbani, Max Booth III, Joseph Sale, & Jay Wilburn, Neil Gaiman, Jo Kaplan, Jeremy Robert Johnson, Lucy Leitner, and Patrick Freivald, and more come together for a great cause.

You can purchase a copy of Blood Bank to help on their website bloodgutsandstory.com

'EVERYBODY IS A BOOK OF BLOOD: WHEREVER WE'RE OPENED, WE'RE RED.'
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Punking Spider-Man All Up in This Alternate Universe

By Ed Sum

There's a different hero in town, and his name is Hobie Brown. He's the teen behind the mask in Marvel Comics' *Spider-Punk*. This alternate universe version of Spider-Man is a welcome change, and the art is fantastic! His last appearance was in *Spider-Verse* (2019), and he made his debut in *The Amazing Spider-Man Vol. 3* #10 (2015).

Every superhero we're familiar with has a punk counterpart in this world. Looking at them decked out in jean jackets, spiked hoods or leather makes for a terrific update. The first issue showed two other heroes. One of them is Iron Woman. As for the title character, the fact he uses a guitar to fight instead of his webbing is an unusual transition. But when he's clobbered his foe, the action pose he strikes is right out of a rock concert!

In Earth-138, this teen doesn't have a version of Aunt May or Uncle Ben to help guide him (as far as I can tell). The next issue may offer more background, but this character has been around for some time, making cameos here and there.



COMIC-GEDDON

What I want to know is where his relationship with crime-fighting partner Captain Anarchy (a variation of Captain America) is headed.

One of Spider-Punk's foes is Kraven and the Hunters. He's the leader of a dangerous pack, and as for why they're working for the Nazis needs a few more issues to explain why they've sided with this regime. In the main series, he's a Russian and during World War II, this nation and Nazi Germany didn't get along. The talents behind this mini-series—Cody Ziglar (writer) and Justin Mason (artist)—constructed a stylish book, and I hope they have more projects in the works. They've brought to life a world ready to fall apart, and the grunge look owes a debt to Jim Charalampidis' excellent colouring job. The character redesigns certainly capture that teen spirit, and as for

what I can convey about the series, I want more!

I'm sure there'll be spin-offs, but as for who will lead the pack next, my money is on Captain Anarchy!



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BREWING 101

Brewing 101

Hops

By Daniel Van Netten

Hops (*humulus lupulus* - wolf of the ground)

And so the story started where it began, from an undesirable herb, to a key ingredient (barley, hops, yeast, water) in what we call beer. Abbess Hildegard von Bingen (German mystic whose Latin texts inform some of what we know about Medieval Europe) once stated that hops, "are not very useful in benefitting man, because it makes melancholy grow in man, and makes the soul of a man sad, and weighs down the inner organs." In recent history, hops have been placed in and out of context, when very aggressively hopped beer became a trend. Bitterness and hop flavour are often put in the same category but mean two completely different things. It all comes down to the kettle, all varieties of hops have what's called alpha acid (naturally occurring) the alpha acids turn to isoacids when boiling to create bitterness. Long story short, you can add the same amount of hops at the end of the boil and have a hop flavour, or if you added the same amount at the beginning it would be very bitter. The scale of 1-100 of bitterness (the higher the number the more bitter) is called IBU (international bitterness units).

Hops used in brewing are from female plants, low maintenance, easy cloning, and grow to the sun with little foot print.

Hops had no taxation in Germany in the Middle Ages. The Catholic Church would create and demand taxation of a herbal gruit mixture blessed to prevent pagan ritual. A revolution started to aid the Protestant revolt against the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church would tax on a gruit (mixtures of mugwort, yarrow, rosemary, bog myrtle ect..) mixture, not on volume of beer or alcohol content. So became the Bavarian purity law of 1516. Martin Luther's wife, Katharina von Bora (who escaped a nunnery by hiding in a fish barrel) was a renowned brewer, Martin Luther had a mission to take power away from the Catholic Church. In England beer shipping from Burton upon Trent to India would expire. Higher alcohol content and hops (hops have a natural preservative quality) made for a ration that could be diluted and ensure longevity of the beverage. This was the birth of the style known as India Pale Ale.

Hops pop out of the ground in the spring. You only want female plants for beer. You can dig your fingers into the soil and break the rhizome of the plant apart. Depending on the plant and it's age, it could potentially clone other female plants each spring. Hops can also have sedative quality and can be placed in your pillow. In North America early settlers would pick wild hops. English settlers would import cuttings and in 1629 the first commercial hops company began. Currently the Yakima valley in Washington is the dominant hops growing area; however, many hops farms have sprung up all over British Columbia in the recent years. Hops grow particularly well on the west coast. In the 1870s, commercial hops farms were started on Vancouver island. The farms, many of which were located in North Saanich and Sooke, would supply early island breweries such as Victoria Brewing co, Phoenix Brewing, and Silver Spring Brewing. The First Nations would assist in the hops harvest after the banning of the potlatch. The social aspect of the harvest would be a way to keep the oral tradition alive. In North Saanich you can see the ghosts of the hop industry... in some areas old hops vines still climb fence lines and telephone poles, very appropriate to its translation, the climbing wolf or the wolf of the ground.

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The Midweek Mosh

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you all about?

MF: My name is Mike F, I'm a metalhead turned promoter who wanted to use my skills in sales & marketing to make a difference in the scene.

AU: What was the origin of Great White North Metal Promotions?

MF: The project started May 5th, 2020 as an Instagram page (@GWN.metal) after having experienced my first festival with only local DIY metal bands that Winter. Their talent blew me away and I was shocked to learn that many of them weren't signed, yet sounded much better than bands getting all the attention on-line. Like some, I had the horrible misconception at the time that unsigned bands were not worth listening to...the reality is, this is where you find the cutting edge of music! And so I began creating 60s videos called "Artist Spotlights" where I would talk about a killer song from a local BC Metal band to help get the word out there.

This quickly introduced me to many talented bands from across Canada which led to the first evolution of the project that then became dedicated to showcasing exclusively Canadian Metal.

Our second evolution happened in 2021 where I wanted to expand the type of content I was sharing to include full written album reviews, monthly album releases, long form podcasts, and feature the work of both illustrators & photographers that all contribute to a thriving metal scene. Through this time we shared the work of 100s of artists from across Canada and through conversations realized just how much of an impact live music has on our soul...furthermore how negative we all felt without it. This planted the seed for the third evolution of the project which has culminated into "The Midweek Mosh".

AU: Who all is involved and what skills do they each bring to the table?

MF: Like a proper One-Man Black Metal Project, most of the work done for GWN.metal Productions is done by me in a dingy dungeon in the wee hours of the morning after working a full-time job. However, I've always valued collaboration so whenever possible I do partner with members of the Metal Community to create content and more recently to bring live shows & other events to life.



AU: Tell us about The Mid-Week Mosh. What, Where, When, Who?

MF: "The Midweek Mosh" is a summer concert & event series showcasing Canadian Metal which launched on May 25th. GWN.metal Promotions partnered with The Railway Stage & Beer Café to provide a new hub for Metal in the heart of Downtown Vancouver. Although helping bring back concerts was the initial idea, I felt a calling to do something more for the community...something to break the mold & bring people together again. With the support from a few other collaborators & the GM of The Railway Stage, we will be hosting Metal Trivia with prizes to be won, Metal Vinyl Nights with guest DJs, & Metal Karaoke with the ability to request your favourite song in advance! This makes "The Midweek Mosh" one of the most unique projects to be launched in the city & the diverse programming will appeal to multiple types of metalheads in the community.

Check out our full June/July event calendar in this issue of Absolute Underground Magazine or online via our Facebook Page. See you there every Wednesday starting @7:00pm.

AU: I'm glad to hear the Railway will be having shows again. What makes it a unique place for metalheads to gather?

MF: The Railway Stage is a historic venue known for hosting live music since 1981 and is the perfect size to have local bands perform to an intimate crowd. Part of the goal is to help bring new acts to the stage alongside better known local acts, so with the help from a seasoned GM of the nightlife industry, expert in-house sound engineers, and enthusiastic staff, The Railway Stage can become a longstanding reliable spot for metal. Couple this with the venue's ability to indulge customers with many craft brews & tasty food while being steps away from the Skytrain and we have a recipe for a hell of a good time!

AU: What else does Great White North Metal Promotions have planned for the future?

MF: Every year is a learning experience and an opportunity to evolve. I can say for sure that the project will continue highlighting new releases, helping new bands get exposure, and find ways to collaborate with members of the Canadian Metal scene on content. Once "The Midweek Mosh" concludes there is the possibility of us putting on the odd show here and there before the end of 2022 however breaking off into a slightly new direction is in the cards...stay tuned!

AU: Anything else you want to mention or promote?

MF: I want to give a

shout out to Chris, Dave, Phill and the staff from The Railway for helping make this project a reality. Eternal gratitude to the bands that played our debut show: Demon Cleaver, Axedra, and Crown of Madness. A gold star review of one of the best known photographers in the scene, Savannah from Paradox Visuals, for always capturing the right moments in the right way.

AU: Final words for our readers.

MF: I would like to give a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has supported the project along the way and those who will check it out after reading this publication. Without us metal fans supporting our homegrown talent there is no progression for our beloved music. Worse still...no sense of community or belonging. I encourage everyone to go out and buy a piece of merch from a local band, attend more gigs, & engage with the community both on-line & in



person. Be proud of supporting Canadian Metal!

AU: How do people find out more info online?

MF: You can find everything you are looking for in our Linktree: <https://linktr.ee/GWN.metal>

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Pamela Anne 'Jordan' Rooke

23 June 1955-3 April 2022

Jordan's recent death marks the sad end of a remarkable punk trailblazer, an iconoclast whose influence deserves to be much better known. There is a great quote about Jordan from one of the all-time great pop stars Adam Ant: "Jordan created punk rock. She was selling it on the front line." This is true, but Jordan has also left a huge impact on 21st century culture. In 1977 a lady who walked down the street in leather leggings was considered outrageous, now it's the norm and you can buy such garments in any high street store, so fair dues for that, Jordan, well done, splendid! That always

cheers me up.

And you have only to look at the Warrior Women of the *Mad Max* series, especially *Mad Max: Fury Road*, to see the huge cultural imprint Jordan had made. (In the case of *Mad Max: Fury Road*, co-writer and designer Brendan McCarthy was in London during the punk era and even if it was just subconsciously, Jordan and company must have made an impression).

So unique were Jordan's various looks that it would take a book of photographs of her just to



scratch the surface. But there was much more to Jordan than just her image, she was an intelligent and articulate lady and above all, very honest, a rare trait in this day and age.

Jordan's moving to London in the 70s and working for and being muse to Vivienne Westwood in her shop 'SEX', in which Jordan became very much the public face of the shop, is where her influence really began. Tales abound of the various people Jordan knew, the infamous Malcolm McLaren (who saw himself very much as a 20th century Fagin with The Sex Pistols as his very

own artful dodgers), Andy Warhol, Derek Jarman Adam Ant, and more.

We just don't have personalities like this in our very manufactured 21st century. Jordan also managed Adam and the Ants. Really, Jordan was in the heart of the punk rock storm. Punk, then, really was about rebellion, real rebellion, not manufactured 'pop-punk' (an oxymoron in every sense of the word) like Green Day.

Image wise, Jordan ripped up the rule book. Never looking the same twice, never boring, always original. Jordan's life after punk was harrowing, including a difficult marriage and

FALLEN SOLDIERS

addiction to heroin, but her courage in dealing with it all was admirable, as was her subsequent life, not least of all her kindness to animals. She remade herself as a veterinary nurse, an admirable thing to do, but then animals respond far better to love and kindness than humans do.

I'll leave the last words to Jordan (from her excellent autobiography *Defying Gravity*), which is as it should be, it was her life after all!

"I was always determined I was going to excel: at sport, at ballet and as the living work of art I fashioned myself into on my journey to, and my time at, the epicentre of punk. As Jeannie said, I never turned down a challenge, never compromised my belief in always doing something to the best of ability. I wanted to dance and I did defy gravity."

-Steve Earles

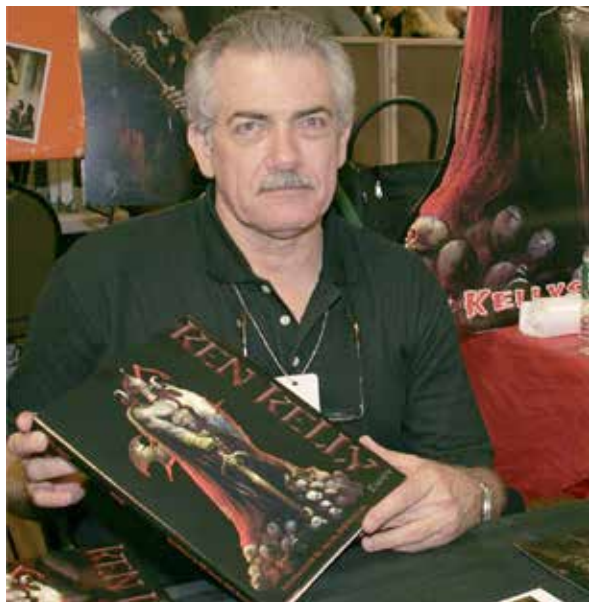
TREVOR SCOTT STRNAD

Vocalist of The Black Dahlia Murder, writer, and Shepard of Good Times.

"It was his life to be your show"

REST IN POWER

1981 - 2022



Ken Kelly

Sad news in the KISS World today, as I just read that Legendary Artist Ken Kelly has passed away at the age of 76. Ken not only painted the iconic KISS *Destroyer* & *Love Gun* album covers. But he painted many album covers for Rainbow, Manowar, & others.



One of the more recent covers he painted was for Ace Frehley's Solo album *Space Invader*. He also was a long time artist for the *Creepy* & *Eerie* Magazines in the 70s. And also did Art for *Conan The Barbarian* & *Tarzan* in the 80s & 90s I was fortunate to meet Ken twice and a nicer, more cool guy you could not meet. I had a great time talking to him at both the NYC & Atlanta KISS Expos in 2017 & 2018. R.I.P. Ken, your Art shall Live on, godspeed, you will be missed !

- Jason Matthew Shane Maher



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